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Paisley January 9th 1773

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D. Hay Fleming

23 October 1918

THE 51 / — 17.

CHRISTIAN's GREAT INTEREST.

IN TWO PARTS.

I. The TRIAL of a SAVING INTEREST in CHRIST.

II. The WAY how to attain it.

By Mr WILLIAM GUTHRIE,
Minister of the Gospel at Finwick.

To which is prefixed,

A large Account of his Life, *&c.* by Way of Introduction, by the late Reverend Mr William Dunlop; and a Preface, by the late Reverend Mr Traill; with some Account of the Author from Mr Wodrow's History.

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, 2 Pet. i. 10.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your ownselves: know ye not your ownselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, Cant. vi. 3.

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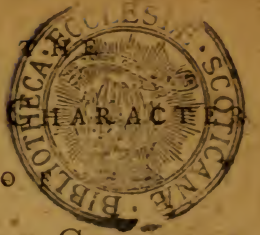
MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE and CHARACTER

OF

Mr WILLIAM GUTHRIE.



THERE is no treatise of this kind that hath been more powerfully recommended to the public esteem and approbation of this church, both by the excellency of its composure, and its uncommon success, and extensive usefulness among persons of all ranks, than this performance of the worthy Mr Guthrie: but though, upon this account, it hath been frequently reprinted, yet most of the editions hitherto published have been very defective, as to the goodness of the paper, the beauty and neatness of the character, or the correctness and accuracy of the printing; which are circumstances that have no small influence on the pleasure, and sometimes on the profit of reading any composure.

These inconveniencies, joined with the high value which was justly entertained for this excellent treatise, were the reasons which determined the publisher of this edition to be at some pains in furnishing the world with copies of it, that should have some tolerable measure of exactness and beauty. For which purpose the greatest care was taken to correct this edition by that copy which the author himself published *anno* 1659. Besides which, the scriptures quoted by him are now transcribed at full length; whereas in that, and all other editions, the chapter and verse are only referred to; which was a mighty inconvenience to the reader, who must be put to a great deal of trouble, if he searched out all the passages in his Bible, and could not but lose the very design of the quotations, if he did it not: and consequently this present edition may, upon this account, be read with more

pleasure, and to better advantage than those which have preceded it. An orderly division of the whole treatise into chapters, and a distinction of the several periods by new lines conveniently disposed, which are another improvement of the present impression, do also contribute an additional ornament and advantage to this edition.

In the later editions of this treatise, especially such as were printed in England, there is one considerable defect; several words and phrases used by the author have been changed, because it was thought they would not be easily understood by the generality of English readers, and others of a more modern dress placed in their stead: but besides that this is too great a freedom to be used by the editors of any author's performances, and detracts from their genuine purity; the persons who assumed that liberty in the present case, have had the misfortune not to understand the Scoticisms themselves; and therefore have imposed a sense upon some passages, very different from the design and meaning of the writer. Now that also is remedied in this edition, where every thing is restored to its original purity; and a list of Scots words, with an explication of them, is subjoined, whereby they are made easy to the English reader.

It is hoped it will not be unacceptable to the reader, that we now give some account of the author of so valuable a treatise, and make a few observations upon the performance itself: for though the reverend Mr Traill hath already in some measure prevented us by his preface to the London edition *anno* 1705, yet a very worthy minister of this church, and a near relation of Mr Guthrie's, having provided us with a great many additional materials for this purpose, we are thereby enabled to afford a more distinct and particular information concerning the excellent author, than Mr Traill could do.

Mr William Guthrie was eldest son to the laird of Pitforthy in the shire of Angus, a cadet of the old family of Guthrie; and by the mother's side descended from the ancient house of Easter-Ogle, of which she was a daughter: whereby he enjoyed such advantages of birth, as at least raised him above the contempt of those who give the highest value to nobleness of blood, and dote most fondly

fondly on the antiquity of families. God bleſſed his parents with a numerous offspring, ſo that he had three ſiſters german, and four brothers, all of which, except one, dedicated themſelves to the ſervice of God in the goſpel of his Son: namely, Robert, who was licenſed to preach, but never ordained to a parochial charge, his tender conſtitution and numerous infirmities rendering him unequal for ſo laborious an office, and bringing him ſoon to an end of his days. Alexander, who became miniſter of the pariſh of Strickathrow, in the preſbytery of Brechin in Angus, about the year 1645, where he continued a pious and uſeful labourer in the work of the goſpel, till the introduction of Prelacy; which unhappy change of our conſtitution affected him in the tendereſt manner, and is thought to have ſhortened his days, and contributed to his death, *anno* 1661. And John the youngeſt ſon, miniſter of Torbolton in the ſhire of Air, in which poſt he remained till he was turned out at the reſtoration, for non-conformity, and had his ſhare of the violence and cruelty which then reigned; till in the year 1669 he was removed to the better world of peace and joy. And as it was a very diſtinguiſhed honour to this family, that of five ſons, four of them ſhould have devoted themſelves to the nobleſt employment of human nature, the miniſtry of reconciliation, and the promoting the eternal happineſs of periſhing ſouls; ſo no doubt it was one of the moſt pleaſing circumſtances in the life of our author, and could not but mightily heighten the endearments of a natural relation to his brothers, that they were at the ſame time brethren in the miniſtry, and united in the peculiar ſervice of their common Lord.

He was born at Pitforthy in the year 1620, and no ſooner got beyond the bloom of infancy, but he gave proofs of his capacity and genius, by very quick and conſiderable advances in the Latin and Greek tongues. After which he was ſent to the univerſity of St Andrews, where he ſtudied philoſophy under the memorable Mr James Guthrie, who was afterwards miniſter at Stirling; and became ſo famous by his undaunted zeal for the religion and liberty of his country, and by his being made one of the earlieſt ſacrifices to the growing tyranny of K. Charles II's reign. The ſcholar being the maſter's

lation, was entitled to his peculiar care, lodged, when at the college, in the same chamber with him, and had thereby the principles of learning infused into him with more accuracy and advantage than his class-fellows, in conjunction with a constant regard to God and religion, and early impressions of piety; and no doubt this happy situation contributed not a little to the unusual progress he made in all the parts of university studies.

Having taken the degree of Master of arts, he applied himself for some years to the study of divinity, under the direction of Mr Samuel Rutherford. After which, being entered upon trials, which he underwent with great applause, he was licensed to preach the gospel in August 1642. And, according to Mr Traill's account, he not only happily improved in theological learning, under Mr Rutherford as professor of divinity, but the ministry of that good man, so justly celebrated for his affecting and lively preaching, and holy life, was, by the blessing of God, made the instrument, if not of his conversion, which his early piety gives us ground to believe was sooner effected, at least of great advances in a religious life, which was so endeared to his soul, that he resolved to devote himself to the immediate service of God in the office of the holy ministry: and in consequence of that pious resolution, he gave an uncommon instance of mortification to the world, and with how ardent a zeal he designed to give himself wholly to the work of the gospel, in quitting his paternal estate to the only brother of the five who was not engaged in the sacred office, that thereby he himself might be perfectly disentangled from the affairs of this life, and entirely employed in those of the eternal world. Soon after his being licensed he left St Andrews, accompanied with the high esteem and approbation of the professors of that university, which they gave proof of, by a recommendation conceived in terms so full and strong, that they bore the character of an inward regard and value, more than the form of a customary testimonial. After this, he became governor to my Lord Mauchlin, eldest son to the Earl of Lowdon, chancellor of Scotland; in which station he continued till he entered upon a parochial charge, of which this was the occasion.

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He was employed to preach in Galſtoun, upon a preparation-day, before the celebration of the Lord's ſupper, and where ſeveral members of the new erected pariſh of Finwick being preſent, they were ſo much edified by his ſermon, and conceived ſo juſt a value for him, that they immediately reſolved to make choice of him for their miniſter; and, in conſequence hereof, gave him a very harmonious call, which Mr Guthrie having complied with, he was ordained to the ſacred office in that pariſh, November 7th, 1644. In this place he had peculiar difficulties to ſtruggle with, and many circumſtances of his miniſtry extremely diſcouraging; and yet, through the divine bleſſing, the goſpel preached by him had ſurpriſing ſucceſs, and became, in an eminent manner, the wiſdom and power of God to the ſalvation of loſt ſouls.

As this was a new erected pariſh, and Mr Guthrie the firſt paſtor of it; the people had been very much neglected, and had not enjoyed the means of grace with that eaſe and advantage which others were favoured with: the melancholy effects whereof were evidently diſcernible in the rudeneſs and groſs ignorance of many of them; and conſequently in a too general neglect of God and religion.

But under all theſe diſadvantages, that heavenly zeal for the glory of his great Maſter which animated the labours of this excellent miniſter, his fervent love to the ſouls of men dying in their ſins, and his holy wiſdom and diligence in reclaiming and inſtructing them, were ſo honoured by God, and accompanied with the powerful influences of his holy Spirit, that in a little time a noble change was wrought upon a barbarous multitude: they were almoſt all perſuaded to attend the public ordinances, to ſet up and maintain the ſtated worſhip of God in their families; and ſcarce was there a houſe in the whole pariſh, that did not bring forth ſome fruits of his miniſtry, and afford ſome real converts to a religious life. And thus he was made the inſtrument of many notable triumphs of victorious grace, which Jeſus Chriſt leads over the ſouls of obſtinate tranſgreſſors, when he turns them from their ways, and ſubdues the people under him. And what can be more worthy of everlaſting remembrance, than ſuch glorious atchievements in the ſpiritual warfare, and

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successful battles with the implacable enemy of the happiness of mankind, and the kingdom of their Maker, which will one day shine with an eternal lustre, and be celebrated with louder and more lasting acclamations of an endless world, than the fading honour of an earthly diadem, or the bravest actions and most finished victory of any of the heroes of war, who make now such noise and bustle upon the stage? And how little needed the man we are now speaking of, to envy the dazzling pomp and shew of this earth, or to be desirous of its richest treasures? He possessed another portion, since almost every family in his parish, however little and obscure, afforded a shining ornament for that divine crown of glory and rejoicing, which shall be beautified with the lustre of an eternal excellency, and be, by the triumphant King of the church, bestowed upon all those who have turned many unto righteousness.

Mr Guthrie was possessed of all these qualities which became a minister of the gospel, and being accompanied by the powerful influences of divine grace, gave a happy prospect of uncommon success: for, besides his excellent endowments which were discovered in the pulpit, he was eminently fitted to improve, for the edification of his people, the ministerial duties of visiting and catechizing; in performing whereof he joined an indefatigable diligence to a holy skill, knew how to embrace every opportunity of discoursing upon the most important and awful subjects, in a plain and familiar manner, and of recommending religion to the consciences of every one in the way which their special circumstances called for. And it was his peculiar care to endear the ways of God to the youth of his parish, and give them early impressions of an eternal world, before the devil and their lusts had seized upon their hearts, and enslaved them: and the seed of grace that was thus sown during the spring of life, was, through the divine blessing, preserved in many as they advanced in years, and brought forth much fruit. Nor did Mr Guthrie neglect, in visiting poor families, to join works of charity to his instructions, and imitate his great Master, in shewing compassion both to the bodies and souls of men. By all which winning methods he engaged their esteem and affections, which could

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not fail to add a mighty force to his exhortations and reproofs.

He excelled also in that useful mean of knowledge, catechizing, and avoided those mistakes in the management of this exercise, which frequently lessen the advantage thereof: his questions were mostly confined to such truths of the doctrine according to godliness, as were recommended by their great importance, and extensive influence upon practical religion; herein conforming himself to the apostolical injunction, by insisting upon these things which were good and profitable unto men, and avoiding foolish and trifling questions that were vain and useless; and knowing that it was his business to feed the meanest and weakest of the Christian flock with wholesome instruction, he adapted these exercises to the lowest capacities, begun with the most easy and obvious truths of religion, and so prepared the way for those which required a more enlightened understanding. He was careful not to expose the ignorant, so as to beget a distaste in them of the means of knowledge, nor to confound the modest and bashful, but by his meekness and condescension he encouraged and engaged them; whereby catechizing became a pleasure to them, and he had the joy to see useful and solid knowledge spreading itself among a people whom he found grosly ignorant.

His own experience in the ways of God, and the great depths of troubles and sorrows, doubts and fears, whereby awakened consciences are exercised, into which he himself was often plunged, eminently qualified him for assisting and comforting others in the like circumstances, for strengthening the weak hands, and confirming the feeble knees; and could not miss to beget in him that affectionate concern for poor souls, those bowels of tenderness and sympathy, which can never be found with any but such, who themselves have had a feeling acquaintance with the methods of the spiritual life, and the work of the holy Spirit in their own hearts and lives. And it were easy to enlarge upon the uncommon dexterity which this excellent person had in improving sickness, and the approaches of the king of terrors, to the advantage of those who were exposed to them: so that though instances of a deathbed repentance rarely happen, and it be indeed

deed infinite madneſs to delay to the laſt hour that work which is of eternal conſequence; yet there wanted not evidences of the divine bleſſing upon his endeavours to reclaim ſinners, and call them to God even in the laſt hour.

It would be juſtly blameable if we neglected to mention one other noble quality of Mr Guthrie's. The ſtate of his health made it neceſſary for him to uſe frequent and vigorous exerciſes, and this made him chooſe fiſhing and fowling for his common recreations: but as he was always animated by a flaming zeal for the glory of his bleſſed Maſter, and a tender compaſſion to the ſouls of men, and as it was the principal thing made him deſire life and health, that he might employ them in propagating the kingdom of God, and turning tranſgreſſors from their ways; ſo the very hours of his recreation were dedicated to this purpoſe which was ſo endeared to him, and he knew how to make his diverſions ſubſervient to the nobler ends of his miniſtry, he made them the occaſions of familiarizing his people to him, and introducing himſelf to their affections; and, in the diſguiſe of a ſportſman, he gained ſome to a religious life, whom he could have little influence upon in a miniſter's gown; of which there happened ſeveral memorable examples.

Some of the pariſh were ſo extremely rude and barbarous, that they never attended upon divine worſhip, and knew not ſo much as the face of their paſtor; to ſuch every thing that regarded religion was diſtaſteful, a miniſter would have been enough to have frightened them, nor could he have acceſs either to viſit or catechize them: but what Mr Guthrie might have almoſt otherwiſe deſpaired of, he effectuated by his diverſions; in the habit which he then wore, he conciliated the eſteem and love even of theſe ignorant creatures, made uſe of their curioſity, as well as of nobler arguments, to bring them to the church, and enter them into the paths of ſalvation; ſo that the pulpit was the firſt place which diſcovered to them that it was their miniſter himſelf who had allured them thither; and ſo condeſcending a method of gaining them procured a conſtant attendance upon public ordinances, and was at length accompanied by the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are through Jeſus Chriſt unto the praiſe of God. Thus,

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in imitation of the great apoſtle, being crafty he caught them with guile. And this heavenly wiſdom and dexterity will be one day celebrated with juſter applauſes by the aſſembly of the firſt-born, than the cunningeſt ſtratagems, or the braveſt attempts which raiſe the character of princes and generals, whoſe fame flies now ſwifteſt and wideſt through the world.

Thus his eminent abilities and unwearied diligence in the work of the miniſtry, continued to exert themſelves with diſtinguiſhed ſucceſs; they procured the univerſal love of his pariſh; and he lived for one and twenty years in ſuch perfect harmony with his ſeſſion, that during all that time, there happened not the ſmalleſt difference betwixt them.

His family-affairs were alſo very eaſy and comfortable to him. Auguſt 1645, he was happily married to Agnes Campbell, daughter to David Campbell of Skeldon, in the ſhire of Air, a remote branch of the family of Lowdon; a gentlewoman endowed with all theſe qualities that could render her a bleſſing to her huſband, having joined to a handſome ſhape and comely features, good ſenſe and good breeding, ſweetened by a modeſt chearfulneſs of temper; and what endeared her to Mr Guthrie beyond every thing elſe, ſincere piety: ſo that they lived a little more than twenty years, in the moſt complete friendſhip, and with a conſtant mutual ſatisfaction, founded upon the nobleſt principle, one faith, one hope, one baptiſm, and a ſovereign love to Jeſus Chriſt which zealouſly inſpired them both. By her he had ſix children, two of whom only outlived him, both daughters, who were eminent for their ſincere piety, and endeavoured to follow the example of their excellent parents. One of them was married to Miller of Glenlee, a gentleman in the ſhire of Air; and the other was married to the reverend Mr Patrick Warner, December 1681, when the tyranny and cruelty of the times were growing to their height; and ſo ſhe ſoon became a companion to him in tribulation, impriſonment and baniſhment for the truth's ſake; till the glorious revolution, when Mr Warner was ſettled miniſter of the goſpel at Irvine. Both he and ſhe are yet living, full of years, waiting till their change come. Their children are, William Warner of Ardeir, in the ſhire

shire of Air; and Margaret Warner, married to Mr Robert Wodrow minister of the gospel at Eastwood, to whom we are obliged for the materials, from which this account of Mr Guthrie's life is composed.

We have given a short account of Mr Guthrie's eminent ministerial endowments, as they appeared in the discharge of the pastoral office among his own people, and of the glorious successes wherewith God blessed his zealous love and unwearied diligence: but this was not the sole character which he excelled in; for in every other capacity he gave equal proofs of his superior accomplishments.

He was distinguished in the judicatures of the church, from which he never allowed himself to be absent, by a thorow knowledge of our constitution, an heroic courage and firmness whenever the cause of truth and holiness was concerned; and that modest regard for others, and affection to his brethren, which endeared him to them, and qualified him for the business and duties of society.

When that unhappy distinction betwixt the public resolutioners and the protesters found place in the church, Mr Guthrie thought it his duty to be of the last denomination; yet he took care that his angry passions did not embitter his zeal, which he tempered with a constant moderation, and sweetened with an ardent love to peace. He preached with his brethren of different sentiments; and warmly entertained every thing that had a tendency to union, and could give a prospect of an accommodation. The power of divine grace, and his native genius and temper, with united force engaging him to healing measures, and inspiring him with an abhorrence for such as were factious and divisive; so that during a season of so great difficulties and hazards, he avoided every extreme, and became a bright example of a zealous moderation, whereby he was of more than ordinary usefulness to the church on all public occasions.

In the year 1645, when a young man, he was appointed by the assembly to attend the army; a happy conjunction of all the endowments which could qualify a person for that station, soon determining the church to make him their choice. Being newly married, he was

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then in such circumstances, as, under the Mosaical oeconomy, would have afforded him a dispensation from that service: and his affectionate wife was not a little frightened at the dangers he might be exposed to; which increased her aversion to such a degree, that her reluctant affection struggled with her duty; but the voice of Providence soon gave the last principle the superiority. When he was preparing for his departure, a violent fit of the gravel reduced him to the greatest extremity of pain and danger: his religious spouse understood and improved the divine chastisement; she saw how easily God could put an end to a life she was too apprehensive about; and this wrought her up to a fixed resolution, never to oppose her inclinations to his entering upon any employment whereby he might honour his Master, how formidable soever were the hazards which attended it. While he was with the army, he was in a remarkable manner preserved when in very dangerous circumstances, upon a defeat of a party which he was then with. He ever after retained a grateful sense of the divine goodness; and, after his return to the parish, was animated thereby to a more vigorous diligence in the work of the ministry, and propagating the kingdom of the Son of God, both among his own people, and all who were round about him, his public preaching, especially at the administration of the Lord's supper, and his private conversation conspiring for those noble purposes.

And indeed in other respects also, his shining piety, wisdom, and good breeding, made him universally useful in the country where he lived. The just value which the nobility and gentry in the neighbourhood had for him, and the interest which this gave him with them, enabled him to improve successfully frequent opportunities he had to do good offices to particular persons, to compose differences, and remove feuds which were ready enough to prevail in the country; and to assist the judicatures of the church, by procuring the consent and support of those concerned, in planting vacant congregations with men worthy of the sacred character.

The prevailing of the English sectarians under Oliver Cromwel, and the variety of attempts which they made while in Scotland, upon the constitution and discipline of

the church, was one of the difficulties which the miniſtry had then to ſtruggle with; and it, among others, gave a diſcovery of the excellent qualities of Mr Guthrie. His pleaſant facetious converſation, and maſterly reaſoning, procured him an univerſal reſpect from the Engliſh officers, and made them fond of his company. While at the ſame time, his courage and conſtancy did not fail him in the cauſe of his great Maſter, and were often uſeful to curb the extravagancies of the ſectarians, and maintain order and regularity. One inſtance hereof happened at the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper celebrated at Glaſgow by Mr Andrew Gray. Several of the Engliſh officers had formed a deſign to put in execution the diſorderly principle of a promiſcuous admiſſion to the Lord's table, by coming to it themſelves without acquainting the miniſter, or being in a due manner found worthy of that privilege. Mr Guthrie, to whoſe ſhare it fell to diſpenſe the ſacrament at that table, ſpoke to them, when they were leaving their pews in order to make their attempt, with ſuch gravity, reſolution and zeal, that they were quite confounded, and ſat down again without occaſioning any further diſturbance.

The Quakers alſo endeavoured about this time to ſow tares in Mr Guthrie's pariſh, improving for this end his abſence for ſome weeks, during which he was detained in Angus about his private affairs: but he returned before the poiſon had ſunk deep, recovered ſome that were in hazard of being tainted by its fatal influences; and in conference ſo confounded thoſe heretics, that they deſpaired of ever attacking with ſucceſs a flock guarded by ſo watchful and ſkilful a ſhepherd, whereas they had made too many proſelytes to their wild deluſions in Kilbride, and ſome other neighbouring pariſhes.

It may be eaſily imagined, that the eminent gifts and graces of this excellent perſon would engage pariſhes of greater character and importance than Finwick to deſire his miniſtry, and earneſtly labour for ſucceſs in their attempts to obtain it; and indeed his people and himſelf were frequently expoſed to the trouble of proceſſes of tranſportation, and vexed with fears as to the iſſue of them. Renfrew, Linlithgow, Stirling, Glaſgow, and Edinburgh, having all of them called him. But beſide the indifferent

indifferent opinion he entertained of the method of supplying vacancies by transportations in general, and that the air and diversions of a country life were of use to him in maintaining a healthy constitution; his love to his flock was so warm and constant, that he put an invincible obstinacy against all designs of separating him from them. A relation is indeed founded on the noblest bottom, and sinks deepest into the soul, when it is animated by the principle of the spiritual life; and therefore it must in the highest degree endear a minister to his people, and engage their affection and esteem by the most powerful tie, when his labours have been successful in reclaiming them from sin their ruin, and persuading them to enter upon a religious life; and so they owe to him, as far as they can do to an instrument in the hand of God, the salvation of their immortal souls, which is the incomparably strongest obligation that one man can have to another, and the most flowing source of gratitude: and on the other hand, a minister can scarce miss to have a peculiar tenderness and warmth of divine affection for those, whose father he is after the spirit, and hath been honoured by God in bringing them to the kingdom of his Son, and begetting them through the gospel, whose heavenly birth is now the highest pleasure and brightest triumph of his life, and will be one day his crown of glory and rejoicing. A friendship that had such a rise, and was invigorated by a spirit so pure and active, made Mr Guthrie prefer Finwick, a poor obscure parish, to the most considerable charges in the nation: which was a proof of his mortification to the world, and that he was moved by views superior to temporal interests.

Thus Mr Guthrie continued with his old parish, till the great alteration, which the restoration of King Charles II. made in public affairs. The first discovery that the measures of the court gave of a design to overturn the government of the church, affected the worthy Mr Guthrie in the most sensible part, nor could any thing afford him satisfaction, while she was in trouble, and about to be laid desolate: nor did he let any occasion slip of shewing his concern for that which was dearer to him than his other interests. At the synod of Glasgow, held April 1661, after long reasoning about proper measures

for the security of religion, the matter was referred to a committee: Mr Guthrie presented the draught of an address to the parliament, wherein a faithful testimony was given to the purity of our reformation in worship, doctrine, discipline, and government, in terms equally remarkable for their prudence and their courage. Every body approved of it, and it was transmitted to the synod: but some worthy ministers of the side of the public resolutioners, being doubtful of the seasonableness of such a representation, considering the difficulties of the times, gave an opportunity to those who designed to comply with Prelacy, to procure a delay, and so to crush it; which did not prevent its being serviceable to the end of our now mentioning it, namely, affording a proof of the zealous honesty and firmness of Mr Guthrie.

Another instance whereof was, the resolution he took to wait upon his worthy friend Mr James Guthrie at his execution, notwithstanding the apparent hazards he must thereby have exposed himself to. But his session prevailed upon him, though not without difficulty, by their earnest intreaties, to lay aside a design that could not miss to deprive them immediately of his ministry, which, by the goodness of God, they enjoyed some years after his brethren were ejected.

Next to the protection of a kind Providence, and the fervent prayers of his own people, and of many others, unto which he always attributed this distinguished favour in the first place; Mr Guthrie's being connived at for some time, was principally owing to the favour of some great men in the government, particularly the Earls of Eglintoun and Glencairn, the last of whom had a regard for him which was heightened by a conjunction of esteem and gratitude, Mr Guthrie having had occasion to oblige him when imprisoned for his loyalty before the restoration, which that noble Lord never forgot, and when he was chancellor, contributed what he could to his preservation, by which means he enjoyed the peaceable possession of his church till the year 1664.

As God had designed and prepared him for eminent and extensive services, during this period, his excellent accomplishments now exerted themselves with the greatest efficacy, and his usefulness was more universally diffused

fused through the whole country, which was in a great measure deprived of their pastors. Many then hungered after the word of the Lord, and this made them with more eagerness embrace the advantage which a merciful Providence afforded them, of Mr Guthrie's ministry. Great multitudes resorted to him from all the parts of the West country; his large church was crouded with hearers from Glasgow, Paisly, Lanerk, Hamilton, and other distant places, and his strong and clear voice enabled him to extend the profit of his discourses to the many hundreds who were obliged to keep without doors.

An extraordinary zeal then enlivened the souls of sincere Christians; they were animated by a warm affection to the truth, and an uncommon delight in hearing the joyful sound; and this made them despise the difficulties that lay in their way, and bear chearfully with many inconveniencies, which attendance upon the sacred ordinances was then accompanied with: so that we are assured by several worthy persons who enjoyed Mr Guthrie's ministry at that time, that it was their usual practice to come to Finwick upon Saturday, spend the greatest part of that night in prayer to God, and conversation about the great concerns of their souls, attend on the public worship on the Sabbath, dedicate the remainder of that holy day to religious exercise, and then on the Monday go home ten, twelve, or twenty miles, without grudging the fatigue of so long a way, and the want of sleep and other refreshments, or finding themselves less prepared for any business throughout the week, so much was their heart engaged in the attendance they gave to these sacred administrations. A remarkable blessing accompanied ordinances that were dispensed to people who came with such a disposition of soul: great numbers were converted unto the truth, and many were built up in their most holy faith. A divine power animated the gospel that was preached, and exerted itself in a holy warmth of sanctified affections, a ravishing pleasure in divine fellowship, and a noble joy and triumph in their King and Saviour, which were to be visibly discerned in the hearers; many were confirmed in the good ways of the Lord, strengthened and comforted against temporal fears and discouragements; and the fruits of righteousness discovering their beauty and excellency in a holy

converſation, were a glorious proof of the ſincerity of their profeſſion, and the wonderful ſucceſs of Mr Guthrie's miniſtry. And there are ſome of thoſe yet alive, of whoſe converſion to a religious life God honoured him to be the inſtrument, who are ready to atteſt much more than hath been juſt now ſaid; and can never think, without an exultation of ſoul, and emotion of revived affections, upon the memory of their ſpiritual father, and the power of that victorious grace, which in thoſe days triumphed ſo gloriouſly.

During theſe few years, while Mr Guthrie was connived at, the dangers of the time never frightened him from his duty: but, with a becoming boldneſs, fortified his people in a zealous adherence to the purity of our reformation, warned them of the defection that was then made by the introduction of Prelacy, and inſtructed them in the duties of ſo difficult a ſeaſon; while he recommended by his own ſteadineſs what he taught from the pulpit, he conſtantly maintaining fellowſhip with his ejected brethren, and never making the leaſt compliance with the prelatical ſchemes. And yet in his ſermons he governed his courage and faithfulneſs by Chriſtian prudence; and, with reference to civil affairs, confined himſelf ſo much to the language of the ſacred oracles, and expreſſed himſelf with ſuch a juſt regard to lawful authority, that his enemies could find no occaſion againſt him.

The extraordinary reputation and uſefulneſs of Mr Guthrie, who was admired and followed by all the country, provoked the jealous and angry paſſions of the prelates; and his excellent merit became one of the cauſes of his being attacked. Interceſſions were indeed made in his behalf, but without ſucceſs, particularly by the Earl of Glencairn then chancellor, who made a viſit to the Archbiſhop of Glaſgow, at his houſe there, and at parting aſked it as a particular favour from him, that Mr Guthrie might be overlooked, he knowing him to be an excellent man, and well affected to the civil government: but the biſhop not only refuſed him, but did it with a haughty and diſdainful air, telling him, *That cannot be done, it ſhall not, he is a ringleader and keeper up of ſchiſm in my dioceſe;* and then pretty abruptly left the chancellor. Rowallan, Cuninghamhead, and ſome other

other Presbyterian gentlemen, who were waiting on him, observing the chancellor discomposed when he left the archbishop, presumed to ask what the matter might be. To which the Earl answered, *We have set up these men, and they will tread us under their feet.* In consequence of this resolution of the inexorable Archbishop Burnet, upon the 24th of July 1664, Mr Guthrie was, by a commission from him, suspended, discharged the exercise of his ministry, and his church declared vacant, and he himself by an armed force obliged to remove from it: a large account of which will be given by the Reverend Mr Wodrow, in that useful and much desired work, *The history of the sufferings of the church of Scotland*, which will shortly be published *. He was notwithstanding allowed to live in his manse at Finwick, where he continued some more than a year; during which he was exceeding useful to his people in a private character.

His brother, to whom he had made over his paternal estate of Pitforthy, dying in the summer 1665, Mr Guthrie's presence there was necessary for ordering private affairs, which made him and his wife take journey for Angus about that time. He had not been long in that country, till he was seized by a complication of distempers, the gravel, with which he had been frequently tortured, the gout, and a violent heart burning, at once attacking him with great fury: the agonies which those three terrible engines of pain occasioned, were almost insupportable; and were therefore a scene prepared for a brighter appearance of the constancy, patience, and resignation of this worthy minister. In the midst of his heavy afflictions, he still adored the measures of divine providence, though at the same time he longed for his dissolution, and expressed the satisfaction and joy with which he would make the grave his dwelling-place, when God should think fit to give him rest there: his compassionate Master at last indulged the pious breathings of his soul: after eight or ten days illness he was gathered to his fathers, and died in the house of his brother-in-law, Mr

* *Their memoirs of the life of Mr William Guthrie, were wrote in the year* 1720, *before Mr Wodrow's history was published.*

Lewis

Lewis Skinner minister at Brechin, upon Wednesday the 10th of October 1665, after noon, in the 45th year of his age, and was buried in the church of Brechin, under Pitforthy's desk. And as he himself died in the full assurance of faith, as to his own interest in the covenant of God, and under the pleasing hopes that God would return in glory to the church of Scotland; so we have no doubt that his better part, his soul, was carried by angels to those peaceful regions, not one of the inhabitants whereof ever says that he is sick; and is now shining amidst the dazzling glories of those superior orbs, which are destined for the heroes of Christianity, who have turned many unto righteousness, and have borne a distinguished part in the battles and triumphs of the King of saints.

During his sickness he was visited by the bishop of Brechin, and several Episcopal ministers, his relations and acquaintances; who all had an high value for him, notwithstanding he, with an ingenuous freedom, expressed to them his sorrow for their compliance with the corrupt establishment in ecclesiastical affairs, which was then made.

This short and imperfect account of his life may, in some measure, let the reader into the character of this excellent person: but we hope it will not be unacceptable, if without repeating what hath been already represented, we, in a very plain and simple manner, give some farther account of his character, as we have it from persons of undoubted reputation, who were themselves well acquainted with him.

His person was stately and well shaped, and his features comely and handsome. And while he was raised above an effeminate delicacy, which was unworthy the dignity of the ministerial character, he abhorred a slovenly meanness, as very far below it, and was therefore neat and cleanly in his apparel: and in his whole behaviour, as well as in his dress, there was nothing that could give the least disgust to gentlemen of the politest education and nicest taste. An awful gravity dwelt upon his countenance, and never gave way to levity in conversation, or those freedoms which were unbecoming his sacred office, however allowable they might be to persons

sons of a different order: but he knew how to sweeten and manage his temper, so as never to degenerate into an affected solemnity, or inconversible austerity, but was usually extremely chearful and facetious in his conversation, which made it universally agreeable, and added to the esteem of a minister the endearments of a friend and comrade: though indeed, which is generally the case of great spirits, there was in his temper an intermixture of thoughtfulness and melancholy, which sometimes gained the superiority, when the public interests were endangered, and the enemies of Zion, which was his favourite concern, prevailed.

He used the innocent recreations and exercises which then prevailed, fishing, fowling, and playing upon the ice, which at the same time contributed to preserve a vigorous health, and while in frequent conversation with the best of the neighbouring gentry, as these occasions gave him access, to bear in upon them reproofs and instructions with an inoffensive familiarity.

His strong, clear, and melodious voice, joined to a good ear, gave him a great pleasure in music, in the theory and practice of which he had a more than ordinary dexterity: and he failed not, with mighty joy and satisfaction, to employ frequently his voice for the noblest use of it, the praises of his Maker and Saviour; in which part of divine worship, his soul and body acted with an united and unwearied vigour.

All the other amiable qualities that can give a lustre to a man or a Christian, recommended this excellent person: his generosity, hospitality, and charitable disposition, were on all proper occasions conspicuous, and his modest humility gave a loveliness to his other virtues. Few men had greater temptations offered to pride and vanity, his natural and acquired abilities, great success, established reputation, and the applauses of the whole country who admired him, were all dangerous flatterers, apt to beguile a man into a fond conceit of himself; but his lowliness of mind was proof against these pleasing seducers, nor could they charm him into self-sufficiency and esteem, for he had not so learned Christ, and knew that he possessed nothing, but what he had freely received.

He excelled in another noble part of religion, as well as humanity, an affectionate sympathy with such as were exposed either to outward afflictions, or the heavier troubles of a disquieted soul; for such he had always a melting tenderness, and embraced every occasion of succouring and relieving them: his own experience filled him with pity for those who were in like circumstances, gave him, in some measure, what his great Master hath always in an incomparably more exalted degree for poor sinners, a fellow-feeling of their infirmities, and enabled as well as stirred him up to comfort them with the consolations whereby God had refreshed and solaced his own soul; and he was ever sending up fervent prayers to the throne of grace in their behalf.

We have in the former part of this account of Mr Guthrie, mentioned several of those eminent ministerial qualifications which he possessed, and made his character as a minister equal to that which he so justly enjoyed as a man and a Christian.

In his youth he had been a hard student, and this gave him a value for all the branches of learning, and an acquaintance with them: but above all his favourite employment was the study of the holy scriptures, which he read often in the original languages; and out of this divine treasure of spiritual knowledge he brought out, as our Saviour speaks, things new and old, which were of the highest advantage to him when he came to the pulpit. As a thorough acquaintance with the Bible is the best way to make a good preacher; so this was one mean of that excellency in discourses from the pulpit, for which Mr Guthrie was so much celebrated: and indeed his sermons had all the advantages which could be given them, by a clear explication of the text, observations and enlargements that were important and suitable to the subject, allusions and illustrations adapted to the meanest capacities of his people, and at the same time to the dignity of the pulpit, and the honour of religion, which required a very uncommon talent; and then a lively and affecting application of the doctrines which he taught, to the consciences of his hearers, with an admirable mixture of light and heat, calculated to instruct the ignorant, awaken the secure, and enliven the whole soul in the ways of God:

God: and to conclude, ſermons ſo excellent in their compoſure, were delivered with a clear, ſtrong, and well-tuned voice, a graceful and vehement action, and eyes flowing with tears, which were circumſtances of no little advantage.

In prayer to God Mr Guthrie equalled, if not exceeded himſelf as a preacher: the higheſt ſerioufneſs and fervency, an awe of the great God on his ſoul, and a lively faith in his fatherly goodneſs and care, together with an inward feeling of what he ſpoke, all remarkably accompanying his addreſſes to the throne of grace in ſuch a degree, that many who heard him were uſually melted into tears of affection, and exceedingly edified.

And to conclude, all his eminent qualities were ſanctified by the grace of God, and heightened by an unaffected piety, and delightful fellowſhip with God through Chriſt; under the ſhinings of whoſe countenance he habitually lived, and attained to a very uncommon degree of ſpiritual-mindedneſs, of a heavenly frame and temper, and of joy and peace in believing, while he both lived and died in full aſſurance of faith.

We ſhall put an end to this imperfect account of the life and character of ſo eminent a perſon, by the teſtimonies of Mr John Livingſtone miniſter at Ancrum, and Mr Matthew Crawford miniſter at Eaſtwood, both his contemporaries, concerning him. The firſt, in a manuſcript account which he wrote of the miniſters of his own time, hath what follows. "Mr William Guthrie miniſter at Finwick, was a man of a moſt ready gift and "plentiful invention, with moſt appoſite compariſons, fit "both to awaken and pacify conſciences; ſtraight and "ſtedfaſt in the public cauſe of Chriſt; he was a great "light in the weſt of Scotland. He was much and often "troubled with the gravel, whereof he died." In another place he ſays, "In his doctrine Mr William Guthrie "was as full and free as any man in Scotland had ever "been, which, together with the excellency of his preaching gift, did ſo recommend him to the affections of people, that they turned the corn-field of his glebe to a "little town; every one building a houſe for his family "upon it, that they might live under the drop of his "miniſtry."

The

The other, Mr Matthew Crawford, in his manuscript history of the church of Scotland, hath these words: "Mr William Guthrie was a burning and shining light, "kept in after many others, by the favour of the old "Earl of Eglintoun, the chancellor's father-in-law. He "converted and confirmed many thousand souls, and "was esteemed the greatest practical preacher in Scot-"land."

Mr Rutherford in his letters hath some passages concerning Mr Guthrie; but these being already published, it would be needless to transcribe any thing from them; nor shall we detain the reader by the character which Mr Traill gives of Mr Guthrie from his own knowledge of him, since it may be found with more advantage in the preface which that worthy minister prefixed to the edition of this treatise published at London 1705, and since reprinted at Edinburgh.

Though few people have been in all respects better qualified to write upon practical subjects, yet the modest and diffident sentiments which Mr Guthrie always entertained of himself, deprived the world of the great advantage they would have reaped from his sermons, and other compositures of this nature, had he thought fit to make them public. But, to the no small loss of the church, this excellent treatise is the only genuine performance of Mr Guthrie which hath seen the light, the publication whereof was owing to another cause rather than to the inclination of the author, which was plainly enough forced, upon this occasion. Some unknown person came by a copy of a few imperfect notes of some sermons that Mr Guthrie had preached upon the 55th of Isaiah, with a relation to personal covenanting; and without the smallest intimation of his design made to him, printed them in a small pamphlet of 61 pages 12mo, under this title, *A clear, attractive, warming beam of light, from Christ the Sun of life, leading to himself; wherein is held forth a clear, sound, and easy way of a soul's particular closing with God, in the covenant of free grace, to the full ending and clearing all debates thereanent. Printed at Aberdeen by* 7. *B.* 1659. The book indeed was anonymous, but Mr Guthrie was reputed the author of it by the whole country, and so obliged to take notice

notice of it: he was equally displeased at the vanity of the title, and the gross defects of the work itself, which consisted of some broken notes of his sermons, confusedly huddled together by an injudicious hand; and when he saw that it was the only remedy, he felt himself under a necessity, however uneasy to him, to review his sermons, from which he soon composed this admirable treatise.

There were indeed, after the restoration, some sermons of Mr Guthrie's, upon Hos. xiii. 9. and a few other texts, printed from very imperfect notes taken by a hearer, by some obscure person who wanted to make a little gain: but as those could in no just sense be accounted the work of Mr Guthrie, being both extremely corrupt and defective, and were very injurious to his memory; Mrs Guthrie his widow printed an advertisement, and spread it as far as she could, to guard the public from being imposed upon by those spurious sermons, which in a great measure put a stop to so unfair a practice; and should in reason have prevented the disingenuous extracts of some coarse unguarded expressions from them, which are to be met with in some prelatical pamphlets, whereby they endeavour calumniously to expose the Presbyterian interest, from the falsely alledged failures of one of its eminent guides and supporters.

This small treatise, *The Christian's great interest*, the only genuine work of Mr Guthrie, hath been blessed by God with wonderful success in our own country; it was published very seasonably, a little before the introduction of Prelacy at the restoration; nor is the conduct of a merciful providence to be overlooked in affording so useful a help to multitudes of the people of God, when their worthy pastors were torn from them. Several have owed their conversion unto a religious life, to the reading of the treatise; and many thousands have been thereby mightily edified and built up in the most holy faith.

Nor hath it less regard paid it abroad in England; its author and itself were highly esteemed by the greatest and best men there; and that there could not be a greater honour done it, than by the character given thereof by Dr Owen, will appear to all who are acquainted with the

incomparable learning and worth of that excellent ſcholar and divine; as we have the ſtory from a reverend miniſter of this church yet alive, who had the Doctor's ſentiments from his own mouth. One day in converſation with him, the Doctor ſpeaking of Scotland, ſaid to our informer, "You have truly men of great ſpirits in Scotland, there is for a gentleman Mr Bailie of Jerviſwood, a perſon of the greateſt abilities I ever almoſt met with: and for divines," ſaid he, pulling out of his pocket a little gilded copy of this treatiſe of Mr Guthrie's, "that author I take to have been one of the greateſt divines that ever wrote; it is my vademecum, and I carry it, and the Sedan New Teſtament ſtill about with me; I have written ſeveral folios, but there is more divinity in it than in them all." Though the great modeſty of this admirable divine, made him give a very unequal character of his own excellent performances, yet this does not hinder ſuch an account of Mr Guthrie's book, given by ſo maſterly a judge, from being as much for its reputation as any thing of that nature can be.

Nor was the uſefulneſs of this pious treatiſe confined, either to the author's own country or language; foreigners alſo valued it, tranſlated it, and were eminently profited thereby. It was tranſlated into low Dutch by the reverend and pious Mr Koelman, and was highly eſteemed in Holland, ſo that Mrs Guthrie and one of her daughters met with uncommon civilities and kindneſs, when their relation to its author was known. It is alſo tranſlated into French and high Dutch: and we are informed, that it was alſo tranſlated into one of the Eaſtern tongues, at the charges of that noble patron of religion, learning, and charity, the honourable Robert Boyle.

After what hath been ſaid of the intrinſic excellency of this uſeful book, it might perhaps appear both needleſs and aſſuming for us to pretend to give any further character of it, or recommend it to the eſteem and uſe of the public.

THus far the very learned and excellent author of this preface had proceeded in it, when it pleaſed his Lord and Maſter to call him to the everlaſting reward

ward of his labours, to his own unspeakable advantage, but to the great loss of the church, and inexpressible grief of all his surviving friends.

But he having proposed at his entering upon this preface, not only to give some account of the author, which is all death has permitted him to do, but also to make some observations upon the work itself: some thought the preface would be imperfect, if this likewise were not done. It is therefore here essayed, though with very unequal abilities.

This excellent treatise (which has been already so often published, translated into foreign languages, and passed the course of more than sixty years with universal applause) hath already its praises in the churches of Christ; and its just and universal esteem so well settled, as to need no letters of commendation from any man, especially from so obscure a hand as mine; yet to give some account of the reasons for which it has been so highly valued to those who have never read it, to clear and confirm the grounds upon which is founded the just esteem of others who have already perused it, to prevent the prejudices that may be entertained by some, and a little to lay open the spirit of the author and his doctrine, that this treatise may be read with the more extensive advantage by all; will, we hope, not be unacceptable to any, but grateful and edifying to those who are desirous that the church and their own souls should reap all possible advantage by such books as are published.

The observations that may be made upon this treatise, are either such as concern the style of it, or the doctrine contained in it, or else the author's way and manner of managing his subject, and the several branches of it.

As to the style, that would need but little apology, though the book were appearing now for the first time in the world: for, bating some few expressions, and these too occurring but seldom, that are now become somewhat obsolete, the words and phrases used are just and grave, clear and significant, level to the capacity of the meanest, and yet not below that of the greatest. But considering that this treatise was written near seventy years ago, since which time our language has suffered great changes, the style of it deserves not only our acceptance, but even our

high eſteem. It is plain, and yet decent, and adorned with all needful beauty; clear, and yet conciſe and comprehenſive; few books written in this country about that time are ſo pure in their ſtile: and this will be the more valued, if we remember what the author ſays in his preface, "that in this work he has mainly, if not only, con-"ſulted the advantage of the rude and ignorant;" for while he teaches theſe in a plain ſtile, he entertains even the learned, that are ſerious, agreeably. So that whoever nauſeates this book for its ſtile, ſhews himſelf more of a critical than of a Chriſtian ſpirit.

The beauty of the ſtile is exceeded, and even eclipſed, by the excellency of the matter which it contains: upon which many obſervations might be made, very uſeful and neceſſary to be remembered in theſe giddy times. The ſubject which he handles is, of all others, of the greateſt importance and moment to every man: it is the Chriſtian's great intereſt, his greateſt intereſt indeed, his union with Chriſt the bleſſed Redeemer, and his title to the invaluable and glorious bleſſings of his purchaſe. The two parts of this great ſubject which he treats of, are theſe which moſt nearly touch every Chriſtian, and which he is moſt called to bring to a clear and ſatisfying iſſue; how a perſon may try his intereſt in Chriſt, and, how he may attain to it, and ſecure it. Happy that man who can ſatisfy himſelf as to theſe.

In managing theſe heads of his diſcourſe, it is evident to every one who reads this treatiſe, that the author founds his doctrine upon the principles of that ſyſtem, which aſſerts free grace as the cauſe of our ſalvation, and of all that leads to it, theſe principles which were at firſt delivered to the ſaints in the holy ſcriptures, reſtored again with the ſcriptures at the glorious reformation from Popery, received into almoſt all the Confeſſions of faith of the reformed churches, and fully aſſerted by the ſynod of Dort, in oppoſition to Pelagian and Semipelagian errors. Upon this ſyſtem is founded the doctrine of this treatiſe, in which the author aſſerts or ſuppoſes particular election, effectual grace, man's natural inability to do what is ſpiritually good, Chriſt's ſatisfying for the elect only, and the perſeverance of the ſaints: theſe principles

plainly

plainly run through the whole work, and it is bottomed upon them.

Yet at the same time nothing is omitted, that naturally could fall within such a work, to inculcate the necessity of holiness, and universal obedience to God's holy law. The freedom and fulness of the grace of Christ in the gospel is so taught, as not to justle out the necessity of our own utmost diligence, and care to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; it was not the author's business, in so small and so practical a treatise, to shew explicitly the consistency of these two together; he knew this was sufficiently done in books of a controversial nature: but holding to the doctrine of our excellent Westminster Confession, he so exalts free grace as not to invalidate the obligation of the moral law, he so asserts our natural corruption as not to loosen our obligations to gospel-obedience, and equally discourages free-will and merit on the one hand, and slothfulness and security on the other; and this not by direct assertions upon these heads, which are consequentially overturned by contrary doctrines laid down in other places, as is done in some late books of modern divinity, but by asserting the principles upon which they depend.

Thus he does not, with some, exclude the word *condition* from the new covenant, as if there were a hazard of making God's own terms of his covenant too necessary, and some danger of binding them too fast upon the souls of his people: but, with our Larger Catechism, he frequently makes use of that word throughout the whole book, without apprehending any danger from it; and asserts oftener than once in the plainest and strongest terms, that faith is the condition of the new covenant.

This faith he does not place, as some have done, in a firm persuasion that Christ died for us; nay, he refutes this as a most dangerous and absurd notion; but "in the "stating of the heart upon God in Christ, as a full "blessing and satisfying portion, in the soul's acquies-"cence in the way of salvation by Christ; it is to ac-"cept of, and close with God's device of saving sinners "by Christ Jesus, held forth in the gospel; and to close "with Christ in his kingly office, as he is anointed to be

" a King to rule over a man in all things." A notion of faith, which, as it exalts free grace, so it excludes the presumption of hypocrites; and is fitted to prevent discouragements and despondency in the truly godly, and to excite to holiness, by causing the soul to go forth towards God in Christ, and to follow hard after him as its chief good and happiness; whereas the other groundless notion of it leads to the very reverse of all these.

This pious and judicious author makes assurance of our interest in Christ to be attainable, and that too more easily than many serious Christians do imagine; yet he will by no means allow it to be of the essence of justifying faith, or inseparable from it: on the contrary he teaches, in the most express terms, that many are truly gracious, and have a good title to eternal life, who do not know so much.

He asserts the freedom and universal extent of the gospel offer in the fullest terms, declaring, That " peace " and salvation is offered to all without exception, that " a man is not to question God's willingness to receive " men who go to Christ honestly:" but does not think it necessary, for laying a foundation for this offer, to affirm, that " Christ died for all men," as some others have imagined; nor torture himself to find out the ground of this general offer, till he has almost wrought himself in to the Arminian scheme. With him " it was for the " sins of the elect that Christ satisfied," and this restriction of Christ's satisfaction, he did not judge inconsistent with an universal offer: but, with other orthodox divines, he judged, That the universal offer was the means for applying Christ's satisfaction to the persons for whom it was specially made; and that this glorious end of converting an elect world, together with God's extensive command to his servants, Matth. xxviii. 19. was sufficient ground to preach the gospel to every man, without perplexing matters with new schemes, which, as it often happens, involves matters instead of explaining them.

Another thing observable in this excellent author, is his particular regard, throughout his whole treatise, unto God's holy law. As the promoting of holiness, and a thorough conversion in Christians, appears to be the great

great design of his work; so he does throughout the whole of it, maintain an inviolable respect for God's law, which is the rule and measure of it. He does not lay out himself (as some innovating writers on the same subject have done) to find out subtle distinctions of the meaning of the word *law*, till he has almost distinguished away the obligation of it. He makes the law a schoolmaster to lead us unto Christ; but then he does not lay it aside, as an almanack out of date, when it has brought us to him. Nay, he makes it one of the first breathings of the new nature, "to acknowledge the law to be "good, holy, just, and spiritual; to accept of Christ's "whole yoke without exception; and to become a ser-"vant of righteousness unto God:" he makes "the ge-"nuine fruit of the new life to be faith working by "love," which is the fulfilling of the law; and tells us, that "the promises are made to faith followed with ho-"liness," which is the same with obedience to it.

Agreeably to this binding force of God's law, he every where excites and encourages Christians, to exert their most earnest and vehement endeavours in the work of their salvation: he not only encourages believers, whose powers are by their conversion made active to diligence and industry; but he calls even unconverted sinners, who are dead in trespasses and sins, to essay their duty, and diligently to apply themselves to the practice of it, and gives them great encouragement to do so. He tells us, that "though no words will take effect till God "pour out his Spirit; yet ministers must still press mens "duty upon them, and charge them that they give the "Lord no rest till he send out that Spirit, which he will "give to them that ask it."

He teaches, "That though none do cordially close "with God in Christ Jesus, and acquiesce in that ran-"som found out by God, except only such as are elect-"ed, and whose hearts the Lord doth sovereignly de-"termine to that blessed choice: yet the Lord hath left "it as a duty upon people who hear this gospel, *to close* "*with his offer of salvation, as if it were in their power* "*to do it:* and that the Lord, through these commands "and exhortations, doth convey life and strength, and "the new heart to the elect; and that it is his mind,

"in

" in these commands and invitations, to put people to " some duty, with which he uses to concur for accom- " plishing that business between him and them."

Yea further, answering the objection taken from our natural impotency to close with Christ, he positively affirms, " that if we essay to close with Christ, and rest on him " for the offered salvation, God will not be wanting on " his part; and that it shall not fail on his part, if we " have a mind to the business." Thus he always takes care to keep an harmony betwixt the freedom and power of grace on the one hand, and the necessity and usefulness of our own endeavours on the other; and while he owns our utter inability to do any thing that is spiritually good, he gives all encouragement that can be desired to our own most earnest endeavours.

To this same purpose it may be observed, that he formally exhorts to personal covenanting with God, and largely directs the management of it as a matter of great importance. He did not fear, as some, it seems, now do, that the soul should be guilty of presumption in dedicating itself with all solemnity to God in Christ, and in embracing the offered privilege of sealing a sure covenant with him: he doubted not but that particular persons might do that acceptably, which bodies of men had so often done with great success, and glorious tokens of God's presence with them in holy scripture.

Thus it were easy to enlarge in making many observations upon the excellency and soundness of this author's doctrine; but it is now time to conclude with taking notice briefly, of this excellent author's way and manner of managing his subject, and delivering his doctrine. It is obvious to every one who reads him with attention, that he speaks with a full understanding of his subject; he appears to have meditated deeply upon it, and to have digested fully the several particulars of it: all he says is of a piece and consistent, he seems to have had the last words, and all the intermediate parts of it in view when he wrote the first. He does not write, as some others upon the same subject have done, loosely and incoherently: nor has he made up his book, as they have done theirs, of gathered scraps put together with little connexion, and as little consistency; nay, he speaks every where

where like one that is master of his subject. Yet he writes always with the utmost modesty and caution; he does not impose his own experiences in religion, as absolutely necessary to others, but allows a latitude for God's various ways of dealing with different persons: how carefully does he guard his reader against mistakes upon the several heads which he handles? he does not, as some have done, lay down crude and unguarded assertions in one place, and trust to the attention and judgment of his reader for correcting them by others laid down elsewhere: nay, he was sensible that not to mislead is much better than to bring back those who have wandered, not to poison than to administer an antidote; and therefore under every head he pointedly guards and circumscribes his subject.

He writes from his own experience: one may easily perceive the heart speaking out its own experience almost in every line, and the author feeling, as well as understanding, his matter. At the same time he discovers the greatest judgment and solidity in distinguishing things doubtful, from things certain; and things essential to the Christian life, from things extrinsic and circumstantial to it: founding nothing upon Christian experience, but what has the countenance of holy scripture.

Thus we have in this little book, a treatise upon that subject, which of all others is of the greatest importance to a Christian, written in such a manner as equally exalts free grace, and encourages gospel-holiness, and guarded with the greatest exactness against the opposite extremes of presumption and despondency: a treatise written with the utmost plainness, and yet with great solidity and judgment, with all the depth of a knowing and judicious divine, and the feeling of an experienced Christian. How happy had it been for the church, if none had undertaken to write practical treatises without these and the like qualities of this excellent author? how much for the growth of true religion in mens hearts and lives, if such a plain and useful treatise as this, were as warmly recommended, and as carefully studied, as others of a different character? this treatise of practical Christianity, as ancient as the scriptures, should be found more useful than many Marrows of modern divinity. It is in

this

this edition attended with all the advantages that the publisher could think of, to make it both useful and agreeable to the reader. The Lord himself grant it may further answer its noble end of converting and confirming souls, and in all respects yield much fruit to his honour.

The following account of the reverend Mr William Guthrie is faithfully transcribed from that laborious and worthy divine Mr Robert Wodrow, in his history of the sufferings of the church of Scotland, and is as follows.

MR William Guthrie, minister at Finwick, in the shire of Air, used the greatest of freedom and sincerity in his sermons at this time. I am too nearly concerned in this great man, to say much about him, and therefore choose to give this in the words of a worthy minister, his contemporary, in his character of him. "In his doctrine Mr William Guthrie was as full and "free as any man in Scotland had ever been; which, "together with the excellency of his preaching gift, did "so recommend him to the affections of people, that "they turned the corn-field of his glebe to a little town, "every one building a house for his family upon it, that "they might live under the drop of his ordinances and "ministry." Indeed the Lord gave him an opportunity to bear a longer testimony against the defections of this time, than most of his brethren; till at length the malice of the archbishop of Glasgow turned him out in the year 1664, as we may hear.

Congregational fasts kept.

A good many ministers kept congregational fasts; and that was all almost they could do, since now there was scarce any opportunity of Presbyterial or synodical appointments of this nature; and in some places where there were disaffected persons to delate them, ministers suffered not a little for this practice, and the plainness of their doctrine.

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The other inſtance I promiſed as to the ſufferings of old miniſters this year, is that of the reverend and ſingularly uſeful Mr William Guthrie, miniſter of the goſpel at Finwick. This extraordinary perſon I have particular opportunities to have certain and diſtinct accounts of. I heartily wiſh ſome proper hand would give the public a juſt narrative of this great man's life, which might, I perſuade myſelf, be very uſeful. The broken hints we have, before the laſt edition of his excellent *Saving intereſt*, at London 1705, are lame and indiſtinct, and were writ without the knowledge of his remaining relations, who could have given more juſt and larger accounts: I ſhall therefore here give the more particular hiſtory of his ſufferings at the time, and his being forced to part with his dear flock.

He continues longer at his work than many others.

By the intereſt of ſeveral noblemen and others, to whom Mr Guthrie was very dear, he enjoyed a connivance, and was overlooked for a conſiderable time, when he continued at his Maſter's work, though in his ſermons he was more than ordinarily free and plain.

When Biſhop Burnet comes to Glaſgow, he and ſome other miniſters are attacked.

But ſoon after Dr Alexander Burnet was brought from the ſee of Aberdeen to that of Glaſgow, he and the few remaining miniſters about him were attacked; ſuch as, Mr Livingſton at Biggar, Mr M'Kail at Bothwel, Mr Gabriel Maxwell at Dundonald, Mr Gabriel Cuningham at Dunlop, and Mr Andrew Hutcheſon and Mr William Caſtlelaw, Miniſters at Stewartoun; and perhaps the chancellor's death about this time, helped to pave the way for the greater ſeverity againſt theſe worthy perſons.

Nothing prevails with the archbiſhop to ſpare Mr Guthrie.

The archbiſhop had been addreſſed by ſome of the greateſt in the kingdom, in behalf of Mr Guthrie, and treated them very indiſcreetly: by no importunity would he ſuffer himſelf to be prevailed upon to ſpare him any

longer.

longer. When means and interceſſions could not prevail, Mr Guthrie was warned of the archbiſhop's deſign againſt him, and adviſed by perſons of note, his friends, to ſuffer no reſiſtance to be made to his diſpoſſeſſion of the church and manſe; ſince his enemies wanted only this for a handle to proſecute him criminally for his zeal and faithfulneſs in the former times: ſuch was their ſpite againſt this uſeful man of God.

Wedneſday, July 20th, kept as a congregational faſt with his people.

Under the proſpect of parting with his beloved people, Wedneſday the 20th of July this year, was ſet apart by him for faſting and prayer with his congregation. The text he preached from was, Hoſ. xiii. 9. *O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf.* His ſermon was afterwards printed very unfairly and indiſtinctly, from an uncorrect copy. From that ſcripture, with great plainneſs and affection, he laid before them their ſins, and thoſe of the land, and of that age; and indeed the place was a Bochim.

He preaches the next Lord's day early in the morning, and takes leave of his people.

At the cloſe of that day's work, he gave intimation of ſermon upon the next Lord's day very early, and his own people and many others met him at the church of Finwick betwixt four and five in the morning, where he preached twice to them from the cloſe of his laſt text, *But in me is thine help.* And as he uſed upon ordinary Sabbaths, he had two ſermons and a ſhort interval betwixt them, and diſmiſſed the people before nine in the morning. Upon this melancholy occaſion, he directed them unto the great fountain of help, when the goſpel and miniſters were taken from them; and took his leave of them, commending them to this great God, who was able to build them up, and help them in the time of their need.

No violence uſed againſt the party who came to diſpoſſeſs him.

His people would willingly have ſacrificed all that was dear to them, in defence of the goſpel, and adhering to him.

him. Indeed Mr Guthrie had some difficulty to get their affection to him so far moderated, as to keep them from violent proceedings against the party who came to dispossess him: they would have effectually prevented the church its being declared vacant, and were ready to have *resisted even to blood, striving against sin*, if they had been permitted. But Mr Guthrie's peaceable disposition, his great regard to lawful civil authority, with his prudent foresight of the consequences of such a procedure, both as to the interests of the gospel, his people, and himself, made him lay himself out, and use the interest he had in the people, which was very great, to keep the peace; and there was no disturbance which could be made a handle of by adversaries.

With much difficulty the archbishop gets one to intimate his sentence against Mr Guthrie.

When the archbishop of Glasgow resolved upon dispossessing him, he dealt with several of his curates, to intimate his sentence against Mr Guthrie, and as many refused it. There was an awe upon their spirits, which scared them from meddling with this great man; besides, they very well knew it was an action would render them for ever odious to the west country, and they feared the consequence. At last he prevailed with one who was curate of Calder, as I am told, and promised him five pounds Sterling for his reward: but, poor man! it was the price of blood, the blood of souls, and neither he nor his had much satisfaction in it.

The curate of Calder intimates it, July 24. in the church of Finwick.

Upon the 24th of July, this man came with a party of twelve soldiers to Finwick church on the Lord's day, and, by commission from the archbishop, discharged Mr Guthrie to preach any more at Finwick, declared the church vacant, and suspended him from the exercise of his ministry.

And to himself in the manse.

The commander of the party and the curate, leaving the soldiers without, came into the manse or minister's

houſe. The beſt account I can at this diſtance give of what paſſed in the houſe, is by inſerting a ſhort minute of this, left among the ſmall remains of a valuable collection of papers belonging to Mr Guthrie; which were taken away, as we ſhall afterwards hear, ſome years after this, by violence, and againſt all the rules of equity, from his widow, and fell into the hands of the biſhops. The paper was drawn up at the time to keep up the remembrance of this affair, without any deſign of its being publiſhed, and I give it in its own native and plain dreſs.

The ſum of the curate's diſcourſe when he came and intimated Mr William Guthrie his ſentence of ſuſpenſion, with Mr Guthrie's anſwer to him.

An account of what paſſed in the manſe.

THE curate ſhewed, *that the biſhop and committee, after much lenity ſhewn to him for a long time, were conſtrained to paſs the ſentence of ſuſpenſion againſt him, for not keeping of presbyteries and ſynods with his brethren, and his unpeaceableneſs in the church; of which ſentence he was appointed to make public intimation to him, for which he read his commiſſion under the archbiſhop of Glaſgow his hand.*

Mr Guthrie anſwered, *I judge it not convenient to ſay much in anſwer to what you have ſpoken: only, whereas you alledge there hath been much lenity uſed towards me, be it known unto you, that I take the Lord for party in that, and thank him for it; yea, I look upon it as a door which God opened to me for preaching this goſpel, which neither you nor any man elſe was able to ſhut, till it was given you of God. And as to that ſentence paſſed againſt me, I declare before theſe gentlemen, (the officers of the party), that I lay no weight upon it, as it comes from you, or thoſe who ſent you; though I do reſpect the civil authority, who by their law laid the ground for this ſentence; and were it not for the reverence I owe to the civil magiſtrate, I would not ſurceaſe from the exerciſe of my miniſtry for all that ſentence. And as to the crimes I am charged with, I did keep presbyteries and ſynods with my brethren; but I do not judge thoſe who now ſit*

in

in these to be my brethren, but men who have made defection from the truth and cause of God; nor do I judge those to be free or lawful courts of Christ, that are now sitting. And as to my unpeaceableness, I know I am bidden follow peace with all men, but I know also I am bidden follow it with holiness; and since I could not obtain peace without prejudice to holiness, I thought myself obliged to let it go. And as for your commission, Sir, to intimate this sentence, I here declare I think myself called by the Lord to the work of the ministry, and did forsake my nearest relations in the world, and give up myself to the service of the gospel in this place, having received an unanimous call from this parish, and being tried and ordained by the presbytery; and I bless the Lord he hath given me some success, and a seal of my ministry upon the souls and consciences of not a few that are gone to heaven, and of some that are yet in the way to it. And now, Sir, if you will take it upon you to interrupt my work among this people, as I shall wish the Lord may forgive you the guilt of it, so I cannot but leave all the bad consequences that follow upon it, betwixt God and your own conscience. And here I do further declare before these gentlemen, that I am suspended from my ministry for adhering to the covenants *and work of God, from which you and others have apostatized.*

Here the curate interrupting him, said, *That the Lord had a work before that* covenant *had a being, and that he judged them apostates who adhered to that* covenant; *and that he wished that not only the Lord would forgive him* (*Mr Guthrie*), *but, if it were lawful to pray for the dead,* (*at which expression the soldiers did laugh*), *that the Lord would forgive the sin of this church these hundred years past.*

It is true, answered Mr Guthrie, *the Lord had a work before that* covenant *had a being, but it is as true that it hath been more glorious since that* covenant, *and it is a small thing for us to be judged of you in adhering to that* covenant, *who have so deeply corrupted your ways, and seem to reflect on the whole* work of reformation *from Popery these hundred years past, by intimating that the church had need of pardon for the same.*

As for you, gentlemen, added he, directing himself

to the soldiers, *I wish the Lord may pardon you for countenancing of this man in this business.* One of them scoffingly replied, *I wish we never do a greater fault. Well,* said Mr Guthrie, *a little sin may damn a man's soul.*

Mr Guthrie's civilities to the soldiers.

When this had passed, Mr Guthrie called for a glass of ale, and craving a blessing himself, drank to the commander of the soldiers; and after they had been civilly entertained by him, they left the house. I have it confidently reported, that Mr Guthrie at parting did signify to the curate, that he apprehended some evident mark of the Lord's displeasure was abiding him, for what he was now a doing, and seriously warned him to prepare for some stroke a coming upon him very soon.

The curate died in a little after.

Mr Guthrie's relations, and a worthy old minister yet alive when I write this, who was that day at Finwick with him, from whom I have part of this account, do not mind to have heard any thing of this denunciation; but it might have been without their hearing, since none of them were present at parting. Whatever be in this, I am well assured the curate never preached more after he left Finwick. He came in to Glasgow, and whether he reached Calder, but four miles from it, I know not; but in a few days he died in great torment of an illiack passion, and his wife and children died all in a year, or thereby: and none belonging to him were left: so hazardous a thing it is to meddle with Christ's sent servants.

The kirk declared vacant.

When they left the manse, the curate went into the church of Finwick with the soldiers his guard, and now his hearers, and preached to them not a quarter of an hour, and intimated from the pulpit the bishop's sentence against Mr Guthrie. No body came to hear him, but the party who came with him, and a few children and boys, who created him some disturbance, but were chased off by the soldiers.

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Mr Guthrie continues in the parish till October 1665, *when he died in Angus.*

Mr Guthrie continued in the parish, but preached no more in the church, where, as far as I can learn, there was no curate ever settled. Upon the 10th of October next year, this excellent person died in Angus, whither he went to settle some affairs relating to his estate of Pitforthy there. Thus by the malice of the prelates, this bright and eminent light of the west of Scotland was put under a bushel, yea, extinguished.

Mr William Guthrie dies, October 10.

By this time many of the old Presbyterian ministers, who had seen the glory of the former temple, were got to their rest. The 10th day of October this year, brought the reverend Mr William Guthrie to his Father's house. I shall only add the remark made upon his lamented death, by the worthy minister his contemporary, whom I cited before, when I spoke of him. "This "year the Presbyterians in Scotland lost one of their "pillars, Mr William Guthrie minister of the gospel at "Finwick, one of the most eloquent, successful, popu-"lar preachers, that ever was in Scotland. He died a "sufferer, for he was deposed by the bishop, but in "hopes, that one day the Lord would deliver Scotland "from her thraldom." Many others of the old ministers of this church died about this time in peace, being taken away from the evil to come, which was fast coming on in great measures, and departed under the solid and firm hope of a glorious deliverance coming to this poor church.

A recommendatory PREFACE *by the late Reverend Mr* ROBERT TRAILL.

THIS *little book*, having paſt ſo many *impreſſions*, both in Scotland and England, within the laſt fifty years, (for it is near that time ſince it firſt was printed), and being commended by the acceptance of the ſaints, needeth nothing more, eſpecially from ſo obſcure a hand, to recommend it. But having known the author, I would willingly acquaint the world with ſomewhat of his *character*, after one *hint* about his book. It is to this *author* we owe the firſt motion of *perſonal covenanting with God*. We have heard more, far more, of making *national covenants* for reformation; and of *church-covenants* for mutual goſpel-fellowſhip, than we have ſeen of the keeping of them. But Mr Guthrie firſt wrote of *perſonal covenanting*, as far as ever I can learn; and that, not till he had conſulted many both *miniſters* and *Chriſtians*. He having opened the door, ſeveral have followed, but, *non paſſibus æquis*; and by the length and artificial method in their ſchemes of ſuch *covenants*, have put the practiſers thereof in no ſmall danger of running the matter into a dry formality, the bane of all holy things. But it is plain, that this author deſigned nothing in his ſhort form of words but to cloſe the act of ſaving faith in *Chriſt*, in ſuch expreſſions as ſuit the experience of every believer.

Mr William Guthrie was the eldeſt ſon of a country-gentleman in the ſhire of Angus in Scotland, of a good family, and of a competent eſtate. After he had paſt his courſe of philoſophy at the univerſity of St Andrews, he went to the New-college there, where theology and the Hebrew are taught by ſeveral profeſſors. And it was then no rare thing, for young gentlemen that had no deſign of engaging themſelves in any of the three learned profeſſions, of *law*, *phyſic*, or *divinity*, to ſpend ſome time at that college. Then, and there, it pleaſed the Lord, who had ſeparated him from his mother's womb, to call him by his grace, by the miniſtry of excellent Mr Samuel Rutherford, and this young gentleman became one of the firſt-fruits of his miniſtry at St Andrews. His converſion was begun with great terrors of God on his ſoul,

soul, and was completed with that joy and peace in believing, that did accompany him through his life. Upon this blessed change wrought in him, he did immediately resolve to obey the call of God, to serve him in the ministry of the gospel, which was given him with the Lord's calling him effectually to grace and glory. And he did for this end so dispose of his outward estate, (of which he was born heir), as not to be entangled with the affairs of this life. After some time spent in study, he was called to preach, and quickly after was settled in a congregation in the West of Scotland, and did shine in that place, till a few months before his death, that he was driven away by persecution in 1665. In this place, he laboured with great diligence, and with no less success, as himself owned to the Lord's praise, when he said that there was hardly any under his charge, but were brought to make a fair profession of godliness, and had the worship of God in their families: and it was well known, that many of them were sincere, and not a few of them, eminent Christians. The love he had to his people, made him stifly refuse all calls and invitations to Glasgow or Edinburgh, or Stirling, (where his own cousin, grave Mr James Guthrie, was minister, (afterward *Christ's faithful martyr*, whom I saw die in and for the Lord, at Edinburgh, June 1st 1661), and pleaded much in a general assembly, that he might have his ministry in that city, which was malignant and profane at that time; but all to no purpose). In this place, though an obscure one, but by his ministry, he spent all his few days. I have heard several judicious ministers and Christians observe this of him, that, whereas many worthy ministers have out-lived their zeal, the vigour of their gifts, and their acceptance with the godly, this blessed man rather increased in all these to the last.

His stature was tall and slender, his aspect grave. His natural temper was chearful, witty, and facetious, yet tempered with gravity becoming a minister of Christ. I have seen somewhat of this rare mixture in him myself, and have heard from many who had a great intimacy with him, that they have admired this in him, that immediately after his recreations, and singular sallies of wit and innocent mirth, when called to pray, he would speak to God

God with that holy awe, and faith, and love, and life, as if he had come down from the mount.

His gifts were great, ſtrong natural parts, a clear head, and a ſound heart. His voice was of the beſt ſort; loud, and yet managed with charming cadencies and elevations. His oratory ſingular, and by it he was maſter of the paſſions of his hearers. His action in preaching was more than ordinary; yet was it all decent and taking in him. I have oft thought him in this, the likeſt to the famous Mr John Rogers of Dedham in Eſſex, by the character I had of him by many; and eſpecially from his kinſman, Mr William Jenkyn, who died Chriſt's priſoner in Newgate, 1684.

In preaching, praying, dealing with diſtreſſed conſciences, and in pleading for the cauſe of God in the aſſemblies of miniſters, he was eminent, and generally ſo eſteemed in his day, which I do well remember.

I have heard many paſſages of God's preſence with him, and of his bleſſing of his labours, which I forbear to mention; both becauſe it is unfit to give a *long preface* to a *ſhort book*; and becauſe I am not without hope, that ſome will think it fit to make this great man better known.

The main humbling thing that attended him, (next to the apoſtaſy in the land, and cruel perſecution of the church of Chriſt in it), was a crazy body, afflicted much with the ſtone, and at laſt with an ulcer in his kidneys, which brought him to his grave, in 1665, when he had lived little above forty-two years.

This was the man, that the rulers in Scotland could not then bear: but though the love and eſteem, that moſt of the neighbouring nobility and gentry bare to him, did prevail, for a year or two, to preſerve him in his place, after many of his brethren were caſt out; yet at length, a party of the king's guards, was ſent to turn him out, and to put a ſtranger in his place. Unto which violence he gave way; and went on a viſit to his friends, where he was quickly ſeized with a fit of his diſtemper, and died in 1665, in Angus. I have oft ſeen him, converſed with him, and have heard him preach; and if my youth then did make me an unfit judge of his real great worth, yet his name was ſo famous, his miniſtry ſo followed,

lowed, especially in his last two or three years, by many ejected ministers, and so many desolate congregations, (and both were multiplied in fatal 1662), that I do but declare what was then the common sense of thousands in Scotland, that Mr Guthrie was every way an eminent gospel-minister. I had also a special advantage for knowing the spirit of this great man. My own honoured father and he, kept for many years a constant weekly correspondence by letters; many of which from Mr Guthrie to my father, I did peruse, and several of them I have still by me, writ by his own hand.

This was the *great man*, the author of this *small book*, and it is all that he ever published. Some small scraps of some of his sermons, I have seen in print, published many years after his death, by some honest, but unjudicious hand, that declare little of the true spirit of the author. This much I have said at a slender desire of the reprinter of the book, as judging it both my duty and my honour, to declare what I have seen and heard of this excellent person. And if any think strange, that I, who am none of the oldest of men, can so freely give a character of a person who hath been near forty years dead; I can tell them, that besides the commonness of this same judgment of him, with thousands, in the West of Scotland to this day, (of whom many will censure this account as very lame and defective), I have on record by me in writing for several years, some singular things concerning him, which I forbear to publish.

London, Jan. 30.
1704-5.

RO. TRAILL.

To the READER.

Christian READER,

WHILE the generality of men, especially in these days, by their eager pursuit after low and base interests, have proclaimed as upon the house-tops, how much they have forgotten to make choice of that better part, which, if chosen, should never be taken from them; I have made an essay, such as it is, in the following treatise, to take thee off from this unprofitable, though painful pursuit, by proposing the chiefest of interests, even the Christian's great interest, *to be seriously pondered, and constantly pursued by thee. Thou mayst think it strange to see any thing in print from my pen, as it is indeed a surprise to myself: but necessity hath made me for this once to offer so much violence to my own inclination, in regard that some, without my knowledge, have lately published some imperfect notes of a few of my sermons, most confusedly cast together, prefixing withal this vain title, as displeasing to myself as the publishing of the thing,* A clear attractive warming beam, *&c. Upon this occasion was I prevailed with to publish this little piece, wherein I have purposely used a most homely and plain style, lest otherwise (though when I have stretched myself to the utmost, I am below the judicious and more understanding) I should be above the reach of the rude and ignorant, whose advantage I have mainly, if not only, consulted: I have likewise studied brevity in every thing, so far as I conceived it to be consistent with plainness and perspicuity; knowing that the persons to whom I address myself herein, have neither much money to spend upon books, nor much time to spare upon reading. If thou be a rigid critic, I know thou mayst meet with several things to carp at, yet assure thyself that I had no design to offend thee, neither will thy simple approbation satisfy me; it is thy edification I intend, together with the incitement of some others more expert and experienced in this excellent subject, to handle the same at greater length, which I have more briefly hinted at, who am*

Thy servant in the
Work of the gospel,

WILLIAM GUTHRIE.

AN

EPISTLE COMMENDATORY,

From a Christian FRIEND, giving an account of his thoughts upon perusal of this BOOK.

Christian Friend,

I Have sent you by the bearer this book, which by providence came to my hand, and a blessed providence it was to me; for I hope the same mercy that brought it to my hand, hath brought the Saviour of it to my heart.

Upon perusal of it, I find such a blessed and happy connection betwixt the gifts and the graces of the Spirit, such an holy and humble condescension to my plain capacity, such a serious handling of serious truths, that the language of my heart upon perusal of it, was somewhat like that of the woman of Canaan, John iv. 29. *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did*; or rather, all that God hath done in me, and for me. He that hath waded much in the water of soul-trouble, may here behold a lively description of the spirit of bondage in all its terrors and troubles: and he who is got out of these, and is sunning his soul in the light of God's countenance, may here behold the light side of the cloud; I mean the spirit of adoption, in all its beautiful colours.

The first part of this book sets forth the soul in a storm, when the law comes thundering to the conscience; the last leads it into a calm of sweet peace and serenity, when the Spirit of God comes to a troubled soul, as the Son of God once came to the troubled sea, with a *Peace, be still*, Matth. xiv. 29. But if it should not be thus, the believer is here directed to be willing to want what God is not willing to give; and to know, he is wise to give when he will, what he will, and how he will. I find now, that peace is sown for the righteous, Psal. lxvii. 11. But all do not reap the crop till they come into Immanuel's land, Is. vii. 8. There our joy, as well as our light, shall be clear, and our love perfect.

And if there be any more concerned in this piece than others, (though it deals forth its bread to all its young men

men and young converts); the latter may here behold as in a map or mirror, the ſeveral providences, and various workings of the bleſſed Spirit, that have all concurred in bringing them home to God; and may take notice of all the inducements and remoras they met with in the way; as Moſes was to write a hiſtory of the children of Iſrael *paſſing through the wilderneſs*, Numb. xxxiii. 2. So doth this book, with a holy kind of elegancy, deſcribe the Spirit's leading the ſoul out of its bewildered eſtate, into the ſpiritual Canaan, never leaving it, till it come to the mountain of ſpices, Song viii. 14. out of Satan's gun-ſhot, where his habitation ſhall be the munition of rocks, Iſ. xxxvi. 16. Neither is there one path omitted, ſo far as I could ever read, or gather from my own or others experience; ſo that it may not unfitly be termed, "A ſpiritual day-book of all the paſſages be-"tween the Spirit of God and the ſoul, in its regenera-"tion work;" which is no leſs profitable than delightful for the believer, to be reading over the records of God's love manifeſted in the goſpel; what care and coſt he took with him, to recover him out of the gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity; for trial brings truth to light, and thoſe things, which through many clouds intercepting may have loſt their remembrance in the ſoul, are here clearly diſcovered that they have been; although for the preſent the believer cries out, *How is the gold become dim! how is the fine gold changed!* And the looking over paſt experience brings a renewed Saviour, and a ſpiritual reliſh of thoſe things upon the heart to them who have thus taſted that the Lord is good; at leaſt ſupports the ſoul under the want of ſenſible feeling, whilſt it calls to *remembrance the days of old, the years of God's right hand.* But I have done, and yet methinks I can never write enough of the excellency and utility of this piece, the Lord make it ſo profitable to others, as it hath been to me. To his bleſſing I leave both you and it, and remain,

Your true Chriſtian friend,

G. B.

CHRISTIAN's GREAT INTEREST.

THE INTRODUCTION.

SINCE there be so many people, living under the ordinances, pretending without ground to a special interest in Christ, and to his favour and salvation, as is clear, Matth. vii. 22. 23. 'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, 'Lord, have we not prophesied in thy 'name? and in thy name have cast out 'devils? and in thy name done many 'wonderful works? And then will I pro'fess unto them, I never knew you: de'part from me ye that work iniquity.' Matth. xxv. 11. 12. 'Afterward came 'also the other virgins, saying, Lord, 'Lord, open to us. But he answered and 'said, Verily I say unto you, I know you 'not.' Luke xiii. 24. 'Strive to enter in at 'the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, 'will seek to enter in, and shall not be 'able.' And since many who have good ground of claim to Christ, are not established in the confidence of his favour,

but remain in the dark, without comfort, hesitating concerning the reality of godliness in themselves, and speaking little to the commendation of religion to others, especially in the time of their straits; I shall speak a little to two things of greatest concernment. The one is, How a person shall know if he hath a true and special interest in Christ, and whether he doth lay just claim to God's favour and salvation? The other is, In case a person fall short in the foresaid trial, what course he shall take for making sure God's friendship and salvation to himself?

PART

PART I.

The Trial of a Saving Intereſt in CHRIST.

How ſhall a man know if he hath a true and ſpecial intereſt in Chriſt, and whether he hath or may lay claim juſtly to God's favour and ſalvation?

CHAP. I.

A man's intereſt in Chriſt may be known: it is a matter of the higheſt importance, and is to be determined by ſcripture.

BEfore we ſpeak directly to the queſtion, we ſhall premiſe ſome things to make way for the anſwer.

Firſt, That a man's intereſt in Chriſt, or his gracious ſtate, may be known, and that with more certainty than people do conjecture; yea, and the knowledge of it may be more eaſily attained unto than many do imagine: for, not only hath the Lord commanded men to know their intereſt in him, as a thing attainable, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. 'Examine yourſelves, whether ye be in the faith,' *&c.* 2 Pet. i. 10. 'Give diligence to make your calling and election ſure,' *&c.* But many

of the ſaints have attained unto the clear perſuaſion of their intereſt in Chriſt, and in God as their own God; how often do they call him their *God* and their *portion*, and how perſuaded is Paul, 'that nothing can ſeparate him from 'the love of God?' Rom. viii. 38. 39. Therefore the knowledge of a man's gracious ſtate is attainable.

And this knowledge of it, which may be attained, is no fancy and bare conceit, but it is moſt ſure; 'Doubtleſs 'thou art our Father,' ſaith the prophet in name of the church, Iſ. lxiii. 16. It is clear thus, (1.) That can be no fancy, but a very ſure knowledge, which doth yield to a rational man comfort in moſt real ſtraits: but ſo doth this, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. 'When the people ſpake of ſto-'ning David, he encouraged himſelf in 'the Lord his God.' Pſal. iii. 6. he ſaith there, 'He will not be afraid of ten thou-'ſands that riſe againſt him.' Compare theſe words with verſ. 3. of that pſalm, 'But thou, O Lord, art a ſhield for me; 'my glory, and the lifter up of mine 'head.' Pſal. xxvii. 1. 3. 'The Lord is 'my light, and my ſalvation, whom 'ſhall I fear? The Lord is the ſtrength 'of my life, of whom ſhall I be afraid?

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'Though an hoſt ſhould encamp againſt 'me, my heart ſhall not fear: though 'war ſhould riſe againſt me, in this will 'I be confident.' (2.) That is a ſure knowledge of a thing which maketh a wiſe merchant ſell all he hath, that he may keep it ſure; that maketh a man forego children, lands, life, and ſuffer the ſpoiling of all joyfully: but ſo doth this, Matth. xiii. 44. Mark x. 28. 29. Heb. x. 34. Rom. v. 3. Acts v. 41. (3.) That muſt be a ſure and certain knowledge, and no fancy, whereupon a man voluntarily and freely doth adventure his ſoul, when he is ſtepping in into eternity with this word in his mouth, 'This is all my deſire:' but ſuch a knowledge is this, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

And again, not only may a godly man come to the ſure knowledge of his gracious ſtate, but it is more eaſily attainable than many do apprehend: for, ſuppoſing what ſhall be afterwards proved, that a man may know the gracious work of God's Spirit in himſelf; if he will but argue rationally from thence, he ſhall be forced to conclude his intereſt in Chriſt, unleſs he deny clear ſcripture-truths. I ſhall only make uſe of one here, becauſe we are to ſpeak more

directly to this afterwards. A godly man may argue thus, Whosoever receive Christ, are justly reputed the children of God, John i. 12. 'But as many as re-'ceived him, to them gave he power to 'become the sons of God:' but I have received Christ all the ways which the word there can import; for I please the device of salvation by Christ, I agree to the terms, I welcome the offer of Christ in all his offices, as a King to rule over me, a Priest to offer and intercede for me, a Prophet to teach me; I lay out my heart for him and towards him, resting on him as I am able: what else can be meant by the word *receiving?* Therefore may I say and conclude plainly and warrantably, I am justly to reckon myself God's child according to the foresaid scripture which cannot fail.

The *second* thing to be premised, is, That a man be savingly in covenant with God, is a matter of highest importance, 'it is his life,' Deut. xxxii. 47. And yet very few have or seek after a saving interest in the covenant, and many foolishly think they have such a thing without any solid ground, Matth. vii. 14. 'Few 'find or walk in the narrow way.' This should alarm people to be serious about the

the matter, ſince it is of ſo great conſequence to be in Chriſt; and ſince there be but few that may lay juſt claim to him: and yet many do fooliſhly fancy an intereſt in him, who are deceived by a falſe confidence, as the fooliſh virgins do, Matth. xxv.

The *third* thing to be premiſed, is, Men muſt reſolve to be determined by ſcripture in this matter of their intereſt in Chriſt. The Spirit ſpeaking in the ſcripture, is judge of all controverſies, Iſ. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the teſti-'mony; if they ſpeak not according to 'this word, it is becauſe there is no light 'in them;' and of this alſo, Whether a man be ſavingly in covenant with God or not? Therefore do not mock God whilſt you ſeem to ſearch after ſuch a thing. If we prove from ſcripture, which is the uncontroverted rule, that you are gracious, and have ſtriken covenant ſavingly with God, then reſolve to grant ſo much, and to acquieſce in it: and if the contrary appear, let there be a determination of the controverſy, elſe you do but mock the Lord, and ſo 'your 'bands ſhall be made ſtrong,' Iſ. xxviii. 22.; for, 'a jot of his word cannot 'fail,' Matth. v. 18. Therefore ſeek eye-

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salve from Christ, to judge of things according as the word of God shall discover them to be.

CHAP. II.

Reasons why so few come to the clear knowledge of their interest in Christ.

THE *fourth* thing to be premised, is, Although the matter of a man's interest in Christ be of so great importance, and the way to attain to the knowledge of it so plainly held forth in the scriptures; yet there be but few who reach the distinct knowledge of it. And that this may not discourage any person from attempting it, I shall hint some few reasons, why so few come to the clear knowledge of it; which will also prepare the way for what is to be spoken afterwards.

The *first* thing which doth hinder many from the knowledge of their interest in Christ, is their ignorance of some special principles of religion: As,

1. That it was free love in God's bosom, and nothing in man, that moved him to send a Saviour to perfect the work of redemption: John iii. 16. 'God 'so loved the world, that he gave his 'only

'only begotten Son.' Men are ſtill ſeeking ſome ground for that buſineſs in themſelves, which leads away from ſuitable and high apprehenſions of the firſt ſpring and riſe of God's covenant favour to his people, which hath no reaſon, cauſe, or motive in us; and ſo they cannot come to the knowledge of their intereſt.

2. They are ignorant how that love doth effectually diſcover itſelf to a man's heart, ſo as he hath ground to lay claim to it, *viz.* That ordinarily it doth *firſt* diſcover his broken ſtate in himſelf becauſe of ſin and corruption defiling the whole man, and any thing in him that might be called a righteouſneſs, 'all 'theſe things are loſs and dung,' Phil. iii. 6. 7. 8. 2*dly*, It diſcovereth Chriſt as the full and ſatisfying treaſure above all things; 'The man finds a treaſure, 'for which with joy he ſelleth all,' *&c.* Matth. xiii. 44. 46. 3*dly*, It determineth the heart, and cauſeth it to approach unto a living God in the ordinances, Pſal. lxv. 4. 'Bleſſed is the man whom 'thou chooſeſt, and cauſeſt to approach 'unto thee, that he may dwell in thy 'courts.' And cauſeth the heart to wait upon him, and him alone, Pſal. lxii. 5.

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'My soul, wait thou only upon God.' Thus having dropped in the seed of God in the heart, and formed Christ there, Gal. iv. 19. the heart is changed and made new in the foresaid work, Ezek. xxxvi. 26.; and God's law is so stamped upon the heart in that change, Jer. xxxi. 33. that the whole yoke of Christ is commended to the man without exception, Rom. vii. 12. 16. 'The law is' acknowledged 'good, holy, just, and 'spiritual.' Upon all which, from that new principle of life, there flow out acts of a new life, Gal. v. 6. 'Faith worketh 'by love;' Rom. vi. 18. 22. and the man becometh 'a servant of righteous-'ness, and unto God:' which doth especially appear in the spirituality of worship, John iv. 24. Rom. vii. 6.; men then 'serve God in spirit and truth; and 'in the newness of the spirit, and not 'in the oldness of the letter;' and tenderness in all manner of conversation; the man then 'exerciseth himself, how 'to keep a conscience void of offence to-'ward God, and toward men,' Acts xxiv. 16. Now, this way doth the love of God discover itself unto man and acteth on him, so as he hath ground of laying some good claim to it; so as he may

may juſtly think, that the love which ſent a Saviour, had reſpect to ſuch a man as hath found theſe things made out unto him. Surely ignorance in this doth hinder many from the knowledge of their intereſt in Chriſt; for if a man know not how God worketh with a perſon, ſo as he may juſtly lay claim to his love, which was from eternity, he will wander in the dark, and not come to the knowledge of an intereſt in him.

3. Many are alſo ignorant of this, That God alone is the hope of his people: he is called 'the hope of Iſrael,' Jer. xiv. 8. Although inherent qualifications are evidences of it, yet the ſtaying of the heart upon him as a full bleſſing and ſatisfying portion, is faith, 1 Pet. i. 21. 'The faith and hope muſt 'be in God;' and the only proper condition which giveth right to the ſaving bleſſings of the covenant, Rom. iv. 5. 'To him that worketh not, but believeth---faith is counted for righteouſneſs.' Indeed if any perſon take liberty here, and turn grace into wantonneſs, there is without doubt, in ſo far, a deluſion; ſince there is 'mercy with 'him,' upon condition that it conciliate 'fear to him,' Pſal. cxxx. 4. Yea, hardly

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can any man, who hath found the foresaid expressions of God's love made out upon him, make a cloke of the covenant for sinful liberty, without some measure of a spiritual conflict; in this respect, 'he that is born of God, doth not sin;' and, 'he who doth so sin, hath not seen 'God,' 1 John iii. 6. 9. I say, God is the hope of his people, and not their own holiness. If they intend honesty, and long seriously to be like unto him, many failings should not weaken their hope and confidence; for it is in him who 'changeth not,' Mal. iii. 6. 'And 'if any man sinneth, he hath an Advo-'cate,' 1 John ii. 1. Now, when men place their hope in any other thing beside the Lord, it is no wonder they be kept in a staggering condition, according to the changes of the thing which they make the ground of their hope, since they give not to God the glory due to his name, and which he will not give to another: compare Psal. ix. 10. 'They who know thy name, will 'put their trust in thee;' with Is. xlii. 8. 'My glory will I not give to another, I 'am the Lord, that is my name.'

4. Many are ignorant of the different ways and degrees of God's working with his

his people, and this doth much darken their knowledge and reflex acts of their interest in him. This ignorance doth run mainly on three heads. *1st*, They are ignorant of the different degrees and ways of that law-work, which ordinarily dealeth with men, and of the different ways how the Lord bringeth home people at first to Christ. They consider not that the jailor is not kept an hour in bondage, Acts xvi. Paul is kept in suspence three days, Acts ix. Zaccheus not one moment, Luke xix. *2dly*, They are ignorant of, at least they do not consider, how different the degrees of sanctification are in the saints, and the honourable appearings thereof before men in some, and the sad blemishing thereof in others. Some are very blameless and more free of gross outbreakings, adorning their profession much, as Job, Job i. and Zacharias, Luke i.; these are said to be 'perfect and 'upright, fearing God, and eschewing 'evil; righteous before God, walking 'in all the commandments and ordi-'nances of the Lord blameless:' others were subject to very gross and sad evils, as Solomon, Asa, *&c.* *3dly*, They are ignorant of the different communica-

tions of God's face, and expreſſions of his preſence. Some do walk much in the light of God's countenance, and are much in ſenſible fellowſhip with him, as David was; others are 'all their 'days kept in bondage through fear of 'death,' Heb. ii. 15. Surely the ignorance of the different ways of God's working and dealing with his people, doth very much darken the knowledge of their intereſt in him, whilſt they uſually ſtint the Lord to one way of working, which he doth not keep, as we have ſhewed in the former examples.

The *ſecond* thing which doth darken men about their intereſt in Chriſt, is, There is one thing or other wherein their heart, in ſome reſpect, doth condemn them, as dealing deceitfully and guilefully with God. It is not to be expected, that theſe can come to clearneſs about their intereſt, whoſe heart doth condemn them for keeping up ſome known tranſgreſſion againſt the Lord, which they will not let go, neither are uſing the means which they know to be appointed by God for delivering them from it: neither can theſe come to clearneſs, who know ſome poſitive duty commanded them in their ſtations, which they

they deceitfully ſhift and ſhun, not cloſing chearfully with it, or not willing to be led into it; theſe are alſo, in ſome reſpect, condemned of their own heart, as the former ſort; and in that caſe it is difficult to come to a diſtinct knowledge of their ſtate. 1 John iii. 21. 'If our 'heart condemn us not, then have we 'confidence towards God.' It is ſuppoſed there, that a ſelf-condemning heart maketh void a man's confidence proportionally before God.

I do not deny, but that men may, on good grounds, plead an intereſt in Chriſt, in the caſe of prevailing iniquity, Pſal. lxv. 3. 'Iniquities prevail againſt 'me; as for our tranſgreſſions, thou 'ſhalt purge them away.' Rom. vii. 23. 24. 25. 'I ſee another law in my 'members, warring againſt the law of 'my mind, and bringing me into cap-'tivity to the law of ſin, which is in my 'members. O wretched man that I 'am, who ſhall deliver me from the 'body of this death! I thank God, 'through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. So then, 'with the mind I myſelf ſerve the law 'of God; but with the fleſh the law of 'ſin.' But it is hard to be attained, if at all attainable, when the heart is dealing

deceitfully, and entertaining known guile in a particular: therefore let people clear themselves of the particular which they know too well. It is the thing which doth meet them, marring their confidence and access in all their approaches unto God; see Judg. x. 10.---13. the idolatries of the people are cast up to them by the Lord, and their suit rejected thereupon. That which draweth away the heart first in the morning, and last at night, like 'an oven heated 'at night, and it burneth as a flaming 'fire in the morning,' spoken of the wicked, Hos. vii. 6. and taketh up their thoughts often on their bed, as it is said of some, Psal. xxxvi. 4. 'He devi-'seth mischief upon his bed,' &c.; that which doth lead away the heart in time of religious duty ordinarily, and the remembrance of which hath power to enliven and quicken the spirits, more than the remembrance of God, so as 'their heart is after the heart of some 'detestable thing,' Ezek. xi. 21.; that which withstandeth men when they would gripe the promise, as God casteth up mens sins to them who are meddling with his covenant, Psal. l. 16. 17. 'What 'hast thou to do to declare my statutes,

'or

'or that thou ſhouldſt take my cove-'nant in thy mouth,' *&c.?* that is the thing which doth mar the knowledge of a gracious ſtate; let it go, and it will be more eaſy to reach the knowledge of an intereſt in Chriſt.

The *third* thing which hindereth the knowledge of an intereſt in Chriſt, is a ſpirit of ſloth, and careleſs negligence in many: they complain that they know not whether they be in Chriſt or not: but, as few take pains to be in him; ſo few take pains to try if they be in him. It is a work and buſineſs which cannot be done ſleeping, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. 'Exa-'mine yourſelves, whether ye be in the 'faith; prove your ownſelves: know ye 'not your ownſelves?' *&c.* The ſeveral words uſed there, *viz. Examine*, *prove*, *know*,----ſay that there is a labour in it. Diligence muſt be uſed to make our calling and election ſure, 2 Pet. i. 10. It is a buſineſs above fleſh and blood; the holy anointing, which teacheth all things, 1 John ii. 20. 27. muſt make us know the things freely given us of God, 1 Cor. ii. 12. Shall the Lord impart a buſineſs of ſo great concernment, and not ſo much as be inquired after to do it for men? Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

Be ashamed, you who spend so much time in reading of romances, in adorning your persons, in hawking and hunting, in consulting the law anent your outward state in the world, and it may be in worse things than these: be ashamed that you spend so little time in the search of this, Whether ye be an heir of glory or not; whether you be in the way that leadeth to heaven, or that way which will land you in darkness for ever. You who judge this below you, and unworthy of your pains, any part or minute of your time; it is like, in God's account, you have judged yourselves 'unworthy of 'everlasting life,' so as you shall have no lot with God's people in this matter.

The *fourth* thing that doth darken the knowledge of an interest in Christ, is, Men do not condescend upon what would satisfy them; they complain that God will not shew unto them what he is about to do with them; but cannot yet say they know what would satisfy anent his purpose. This is a sad thing. Shall we think these are serious who have never, as yet, pitched on what would satisfy them, nor are making earnest inquiry after what should satisfy? If the Lord had left us in the dark in that matter,

matter, we were leſs inexcuſable: but ſince the grounds of ſatisfaction, and the true marks of an intereſt in Chriſt, are ſo clear and frequent in ſcripture, and ſo 'many things written, that our joy 'may be full,' 1 John i. 14. and 'that 'thoſe who believe may know that they 'have eternal life,' 1 John v. 13. and ſince 'he that believeth hath a witneſs 'of it in himſelf,' 1 John v. 10. none can pretend excuſe here. We may not here inſiſt to ſhew what may and ſhould ſatisfy anent our intereſt, ſince we are to ſpeak directly to it afterwards.

The *fifth* thing that helpeth much to keep men in the dark anent their intereſt in Chriſt, is, They pitch upon ſome mutable grounds, which are not ſo appoſite proofs of the truth of an intereſt in Chriſt, as of the comfortable ſtate of a triumphing ſoul ſailing before the wind; and marks, which I grant are precious in themſelves, and do make out an intereſt clearly where they are; yet they are ſuch, as without which an intereſt in Chriſt may be, and be known alſo in a good meaſure: we ſhall touch a few of them.

1. Some think that all who have a true intereſt in him, are above the prevailing power

power of every ſin. But this is contrary to that of Pſal. lxv. 3. 'Iniquities 'prevail againſt me; as for our tranſ-'greſſions, thou ſhalt purge them away;' where we find that holy man laying juſt claim to pardon, in the caſe of prevailing iniquity: and that of Rom. vii. 23. 24. 25. where Paul thanketh God through Chriſt, as freed from the condemnation of the law, even whilſt a law in his members leadeth captive unto ſin.

2. Some think that all true ſaints have conſtantly acceſs unto God in prayer, and ſenſible returns of prayer at all times. But this is contrary to the many ſad exerciſes of his people, complaining often that they are not heard nor regarded of God, Pſal. xiii. 1. 'How long wilt 'thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? 'how long wilt thou hide thy face from 'me?' Pſal. xxii. 1. 2. 'My God, my 'God, why haſt thou forſaken me? 'why art thou ſo far from helping me, 'and from the words of my roring? O 'my God, I cry in the day-time, but 'thou heareſt not; and in the night-'ſeaſon, and am not ſilent.'

3. Some think that all who have any true intereſt in him, have God witneſſing the ſame unto them by a high ope-

ration

ration of that witneſſing Spirit of his ſpoken of Rom. viii. 16. 'The Spirit it-'ſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, 'that we are the children of God;' whereof afterwards: and ſo they ſtill ſuſpect their own intereſt in Chriſt, becauſe of the want of this. But they do not remember that they muſt firſt believe, and give credit to that record, which God hath given of the Son, that there is life enough in him for men, 1 John v. 10. 11. and then look for the ſeal and witneſs of the Spirit, Eph. i. 13. 'In whom after ye believed, ye were 'ſealed with the holy Spirit of pro-'miſe,' *&c.* As long as people hold faſt theſe principles and the like, they can hardly come to the knowledge of their gracious ſtate, which God hath warranted people to prove and clear up to themſelves, otherwiſe than by theſe foreſaid things.

CHAP. III.

Some miſtakes concerning an intereſt in Chriſt removed.

THE *fifth* thing to be premiſed, is, The removal of ſome miſtakes whereinto people may readily run themſelves,

ſelves, when we are about to prove their intereſt in Chriſt.

As, 1. It is a miſtake to think, that every one who is in Chriſt, doth know that he is in him; for many are truly gracious, and have a good title to eternal life, who do not know ſo much, until it be made out afterwards, 1 John v. 13. 'Theſe things are written to believers, 'that they may know they have a true 'title to eternal life;' that is, that they may know they are believers, and ſo it is ſuppoſed they knew it not before.

2. It is a miſtake to think, that all who come to the knowledge of their intereſt in Chriſt, do attain an equal certainty about the ſame: one may ſay, 'He is perſuaded nothing preſent or to 'come can ſeparate him from the love 'of God,' Rom. viii. 38.; another cometh but this length, 'I believe, help 'my unbelief,' Mark ix. 24.

3. It is a miſtake to think, that every one who attaineth a ſtrong perſuaſion of his intereſt, doth always hold there; for he who to-day may ſay of the Lord, 'He is his refuge,' Pſal. xci. 2. and 'his 'portion,' Pſal. cxix. 57. will at another time ſay, 'He is cut off,' Pſal. xxxi. 22. and will aſk, if the truth of God's promiſe

promiſe doth fail for evermore? Pſal. lxxvii. 7. 8. 9.

4. It is alſo a miſtake to think, that every one who doth attain a good knowledge of their gracious ſtate, can formally anſwer all objections made to the contrary; but yet they may hold faſt the concluſion, and ſay, 'I know whom I 'have believed,' 2 Tim. i. 12. There be few grounds of the Chriſtian religion, whereof many people are ſo perſuaded, as that they are able to maintain them formally againſt all arguments brought to the contrary, and yet they may and will hold the concluſion ſtedfaſtly and juſtly: ſo it is in this caſe in hand.

5. It is no leſs a miſtake to imagine, that the vain, groundleſs confidence, which many profane ignorant Atheiſts do maintain, is this knowledge of an intereſt in Chriſt, which we plead for; many do falſely avow him to be their Father, John viii. 41. and many look for heaven, who will be beguiled with thoſe fooliſh virgins, Matth. xxv. 12. Yet we muſt not think becauſe of this, that all knowledge of an intereſt is a deluſion and fancy, although theſe fools be deceived; for whilſt thouſands are deluded, ſome can ſay on good and ſolid

lid grounds, 'We know that we are of 'God, and that the whole world lieth 'in wickedness,' 1 John v. 19.

CHAP. IV.

The ways by which the Lord draweth some to Christ without a sensible preparatory law-work.

HAving premised these things, it now followeth that we give some marks by which a man may know if he be savingly in covenant with God, and hath a special interest in Christ, so as he may warrantably lay claim to God's favour and salvation. We shall only pitch upon two great and principal marks, not willing to trouble people with many.

But before we fall upon these, we will speak of a preparatory work of the law, whereof the Lord doth ordinarily make use to prepare his own way in mens souls. This may have its own weight, as a mark with some persons. It is called, The work of the law, or, the work of humiliation. It hath some proportion to that 'spirit of bondage,' Rom. viii. 15. and doth now under the New Testament answer unto it, and usually

ſually leadeth on to the 'ſpirit of adop-
'tion.'

Only here let it be remembered, (1.) That we are not to ſpeak of this preparatory work of the law, as a negative mark of a true intereſt in Chriſt, as if none might lay claim to God's favour, who hath not had this preparatory work in the ſeveral ſteps of it, as we are to ſpeak of it; for, as we ſhall hear, the Lord doth not always keep that path with men. (2.) The great reaſon why we ſpeak of it, is, Becauſe the Lord dealeth with many, whom he doth effectually call, by ſome ſuch preparatory work: and to thoſe, who have been ſo dealt with, it may prove ſtrengthening, and will confirm them in laying the more weight on the marks which follow. (3.) It may help to encourage others, who are under ſuch bondage of ſpirit, as a good prognoſtic of a gracious work to follow: for, as we ſhall circumſtantiate it, it will be rarely found to miſcarry and fail of a gracious iſſue. (4.) Where God uſeth ſuch a preparatory work, he doth not keep one way or meaſure in it, as we ſhall hear.

For the more diſtinct handling of this preparatory work, we ſhall ſhortly

hint the most ordinary ways, by which the Lord leadeth people in unto the covenant savingly, and draweth them unto Christ.

First, There are some called from the womb, as John the Baptist was, Luke i. 41. 44. or in their very young years, before they can be deeply engaged actively in Satan's ways, as Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 15. It cannot be supposed that those have such a preparatory work as we are to speak of. And because some persons may pretend to this way of effectual calling, we offer these marks of it, whereby those who have been so called may be confirmed.

1. Such use from their childhood to be kept free of ordinary pollutions, wherewith children usually are defiled; as swearing, lying, mocking of religion and religious persons, *&c.* Those whom God calleth effectually, he sanctifieth them from the time of that effectual calling: 'Sin cannot have dominion o-'ver them,' as over others, 'because 'they are under grace,' Rom. vi. 14.

2. Religion is, as it were, natural to them; I mean, they need not be much pressed to religious duties, even when they are but children; they run willingly

ly that way, because there is an inward principle of love constraining them, 2 Cor. v. 14. so as they yield themselves servants of righteousness, without outward constraint, Rom. vi. 16.

3. Although such know not when they were first acquainted with God, yet they have afterwards such exercises of spirit befalling, as the saints in scripture, of whose first conversion we hear not, do speak of. They are shut out from God, upon some occasion now and then, and are admitted to come nearer again to their apprehension: their heart is also further broken up by the ordinances, as is said of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14. And ordinarily they do remember, when some special bit of religion and duty, or when some sin, of which they were not taking notice before, was discovered to them. They who can apply these things to themselves, have much to say for their effectual calling from their youth.

Secondly, Some are brought in to Christ in a sovereign gospel-way, when the Lord, by some few words of love swallowing up any law-work, quickly taketh a person prisoner at the first, as he did Zaccheus, Luke xix. and others, who upon a word spoken by Christ, did

leave all and follow him; and we hear no noise of a law-work dealing with them before they close with Christ Jesus.

And because some may pretend to this way of calling, we shall touch some things most remarkable in that transaction with Zaccheus, for their clearing and confirmation. (1.) He had some desire to see Christ, and such a desire, as made him wave that which some would have judged prudence and discretion, whilst he climbeth up upon a tree that he might see him. (2.) Christ spake to his heart, and that word took such hold upon him, that presently with joy he did accept of Christ's offer, and closeth with Christ as Lord, whilst few of any note were following him. (3.) Upon this his heart doth open to the poor, although, it seems, he was a covetous man before. (4.) He hath a due impression of his former ways, evidencing his respect to Moses his law, and this he doth signify before all the company then present, not caring to shame himself in such things as probably were notour to the world. (5.) Upon all these things, Christ confirmeth and ratifieth the bargain by his word; recommending

ing to him that oneness of interest, which behoved to be between him and the saints, and the thoughts of his own lost condition, if Christ had not come and sought him, and found him: all which are clear, Luke xix. 3.----10.

We grant the Lord calleth some so, and if any can lay claim to the special things we have now hinted, they have a good confirmation of God's dealing with them, from that scripture; neither are they to vex themselves because of the want of a distinct preparatory law-work, if their heart hath yielded unto Christ; for a law-work is not desirable, except for this end. Therefore Christ doth offer himself directly in the scripture, and people are invited to come to him: and although many will not come to him who is the Cautioner, until the Spirit of bondage distress them for their debt; yet if any, upon the knowledge of their lost estate, would flee and yield to Christ, none might warrantably press a law-work upon them.

As for others, whom Christ persuaded by a word to follow him; whatsoever he did, or howsoever he spake to them at his first meeting with them, we must rationally suppose, that then he discovered so much of their own necessity, and his

own fulneſs and excellency to them, as made them quit all, and run after him: and if he do ſo to any, we crave no more, ſince there is room enough there for the Phyſician.

So that from all this, as ſome may be confirmed and ſtrengthened, with whom God hath ſo dealt; ſo there is no ground nor occaſion for deluded ſouls to flatter themſelves in their condition, who remain ignorant and ſenſeleſs of their own miſeries and Chriſt's allſufficiency, and hold faſt deceit.

Thirdly, There are ſome brought in to Chriſt in a way yet more declarative of his free grace; and this is, when he effectually calleth men at the hour of death. We find ſomewhat recorded of this way in that pregnant example of the thief on the croſs, Luke xxiii. 39.-----43. Although this ſeems not very pertinent for the purpoſe in hand; yet we ſhall ſpeak a little of it, that on the one hand men may be ſparing to judge and paſs ſentence upon either themſelves or others, before the laſt gaſp. And we ſhall ſo circumſtantiate it, that on the other hand none may dare to delay ſo great a buſineſs to the laſt hour of their life.

We find theſe things remarkable in that

that business between Christ and the thief. (1.) The man falleth at odds with his former companion. (2.) He dareth not speak a wrong word of God, whose hand is on him, but justifieth him in all that is befallen him. (3.) He now seeth Jesus Christ persecuted by the world, without a cause, and most injuriously. (4.) He discovereth Christ to be a Lord and a King, whilst enemies seem to have him at under. (5.) He believeth a being of glory after death so really, that he preferreth a portion of it to the present safety of his bodily life, which he knew Christ was able to grant to him at that time, and he might have chosen that with the other thief. (6.) Although he was much abased in himself, and so humbled, that he pleaded but that Christ would remember him, yet he was nobly daring to throw himself upon the covenant, on life and death; and he had so much faith of Christ's all-sufficiency, that he judged a simple remembrance from Christ, would satisfyingly do his business. (7.) He acquiesced sweetly in the word which Christ spake to him, for the ground of his comfort. All which are very clear in the case of that poor dying man, and

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do prove a very real work of God upon his heart.

As this example may encourage some to wait for good from God, who cannot as yet lay clear claim to any gracious work of his Spirit; so we obtest all, as they love their souls, not to delay their soul-business, hoping for such a cast of Christ's hand in end, as too many do; this being a rare miracle of mercy, with the glory whereof Christ did honourably triumph over the ignominy of his cross; a parallel of which we shall hardly find in all the scripture beside. Yea, as there be but few at all saved, Matth. xx. 16. 'Many be called, but 'few chosen;' and most few saved this way: so the Lord hath peremptorily threatened to laugh at the calamity, and not to hear the cry of such as mocked formerly at his reproof, and would not hear when he called to them, Prov. i. 24. 25. 26. 'Because I have called, 'and ye refused, I have stretched out 'my hand, and no man regarded; but 'ye have set at nought all my counsel, 'and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will 'mock when your fear cometh.' Which scripture, although it doth not shut

mercy's

mercy's door upon any, who at the hour of death do sincerely judge themselves, and flee to Christ, as this penitent thief did; yet it is certain, it implieth that very few, who sit the offer until then, are honoured with repentance as he was; and so their cry, as not being sincere and of the right stamp, shall not be heard.

CHAP. V.

The work of the law by which the Lord prepares his way into mens souls; which is either more violent and sudden, or more calm and gradual.

THE *fourth* and most ordinary way, by which many are brought in to Christ, is by a clear and discernible work of the law, and humiliation, which we ordinarily call 'the Spirit of 'bondage,' as was hinted before. We do not mean that every one, whose conscience is wakened with sin and fear of wrath, doth really close with Christ; the contrary doth appear in Cain, Saul, Judas, *&c.* But there is a conviction of sin, a wakening of conscience, and work of humiliation, which, as we shall circumstantiate it, doth rarely miscar-

ry

ry or fail of a gracious issue, but ordinarily doth resolve into the 'Spirit of a-'doption,' and a gracious work of God's Spirit. And because the Lord dealeth with many sinners this way, and we find that many are much puzzled about the giving judgment of this law-work, we shall speak of it particularly.

This work is either more violent and suddenly expede, or it is more sober and lent, protracted through a greater length of time, and so as the steps of it are very discernible. It is more violent in some, as in the jailor, Paul, and some other converts in the book of the Acts of the apostles, on whom Christ did break in at an instant, and fell on them as with fire and sword, and led them captive terribly; and because some great legal shakings are deceitful, and turn to nothing, if not worse, we shall point at some things remarkable in these converts spoken of before, which did prove the work of the law on them, to have had a gracious issue and result. (1.) Some word of truth or dispensation, putteth the person to a dreadful stand, with a great stir in the soul: some are pricked in heart, Acts ii. 37.; some fall on trembling, Acts xvi. 29. And this is such

ſuch a ſtir, that the perſon is brought to his wits end: 'What wilt thou have 'me to do?' ſaith Paul, Acts ix. 6. 'What muſt I do to be ſaved?' ſaith the jailor, Acts xvi. 30. (2.) The perſon is content to have ſalvation and God's friendſhip on any terms, as the queſtions do import, 'What ſhall I do?' as if he had ſaid, What would I not do? what would I not forego? what would I not undergo? (3.) The perſon accepteth the condition offered by Chriſt and his ſervants, as is clear in the forecited ſcriptures. (4.) The perſon preſently becometh of one intereſt with the ſaints, joining himſelf with that perſecuted ſociety, putting reſpect on thoſe whom he had formerly perſecuted, joining and continuing with them in the profeſſion of Chriſt on all hazards. Thoſe with whom the Lord hath ſo dealt, have much to ſay for a gracious work of God's Spirit in them; and it is like, many of them can date their work from ſuch a particular time and word, or diſpenſation, and can give ſome account of what paſſed between God and them, and of a ſenſible change following in them from that time forward; as Paul giveth a good account

count of the work and way of God with him afterwards, Acts xxii.

Again, the Lord sometimes carrieth on this work more calmly, softly, and lently, protracting it so, as the several steps of mens exercise under it are very discernible. It would draw a great length to enlarge every step of it; we shall touch the most observable things in it.

1. The Lord layeth siege to men, who, it may be, have often refused to yield to him, offering himself in the ordinances; and by some word preached, read, or borne in on the mind, or by some providence leading in unto the word, he doth assault the house kept peaceably by the strong man the devil, and thus Christ, who is the stronger man, cometh upon him, Luke xi. 22. and, by the Spirit of truth, doth fasten the *word* on the man, in which God's curse is denounced against such and such sins, whereof the man knoweth himself guilty. The Spirit convinceth the man, and bindeth it upon him, that he is the same person against whom the word of God doth speak, because he is guilty of such sins; and from some sins the man is led on to see more, until ordinarily he come to see the sins of his youth, sins of omission,

mission, *&c.* Yea, he is led on until he see himself guilty almost of the breach of the whole law; he seeth 'innume-'rable evils compassing him,' as David speaketh in a fit of exercise, Psal. xl. 12. A man sometimes will see ugly sights of sin in this case, and is sharp-sighted to reckon a sibness to every sin almost. Thus 'the Spirit convinceth of sin,' John xvi. 8.

2. The Lord shaketh a special stronghold in the garrison, a refuge of lies, to which the man betaketh himself when his sins are thus discovered to him. The poor man pretendeth to faith in Christ, whereby he thinks his burden is taken off him, as the Pharisees said, John viii. 41. 'We have one Father, even God.' They pretend to a special relation to God as a common Lord. The Spirit of God beats the man from this by the truth of the scriptures, proving that he hath no true faith, and so no interest in Christ, nor any true saving grace; showing clear differences between true grace, and the counterfeit fancies which the man hath in him; and between him and the truly godly, as Christ laboureth to do to those in John viii. 42. 44. 'If God were your 'Father, ye would love me. Ye are of

'the devil, for ye do the lusts of such a 'father.' So, 'fear surpriseth the hy-'pocrite in heart,' Is. xxxiii. 14. especially when the Lord discovereth to him conditions in many of these promises, wherein he trusted most, not easily attainable; he now seeth grace and faith another thing than once he judged them to be. We may, in some respect, apply that word here, 'The Spirit convinceth 'him of sin, because he hath not belie-'ved on the Son:' he is particularly convinced of unbelief, John xvi. 9. He seeth now a huge distance between himself and the godly, who he thought before outstripped him only in some unnecessary, proud, hateful preciseness; he now seeth himself deluded and in the broad way with the perishing multitude; and so, in this sight of his misery, coucheth down under his own burden, which, before this time, he thought Christ did bear for him; he now beginneth to scare at the promises, because of that and such other words, 'What hast thou to do to 'take my covenant in thy mouth,' *&c.?* Psal. l. 16.

3. The man becometh careful about his salvation, and beginneth to take it to heart, as the one thing necessary; he is

is brought to this with the jailor, Acts xvi. 30. 'What shall I do to be saved?' His salvation becometh the leading thing with him: it was least in his thoughts before, but now it prevaileth, and other things are much misregarded by him. Since his soul is ready to perish, what shall it profit him to gain the world, if he lose his soul? Matth. xvi. 26. Some here are much puzzled with the thoughts of an irrevocable decree to their prejudice, and with the fears of uncertain death, which may attach them before they get matters put to a point; and some are vexed with apprehensions, that they are guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is unpardonable, and so are driven a dangerous length, Satan still casting up to them many sad examples of people, who have dolefully put an end to their own exercise: but they are in the hand of one, who knoweth how to succour them that are tempted, Heb. ii. 18.

4. When a man is thus in hazard of miscarrying, the Lord useth a work of preventing mercy towards him, quietly and under hand supporting him; and this is by bearing in upon his mind the possibility of his salvation, leading the man

to the remembrance of pregnant proofs of God's free and rich grace, pardoning groſs tranſgreſſions, ſuch as Manaſſeh, who was a bloody idolatrous man, and had correſpondence with the devil, and yet obtained mercy, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. 13. and other ſcriptures bearing offers of grace and favour indifferently to all who will yield to Chriſt, whatſoever they have been formerly; ſo as the man is brought again to this, 'What ſhall I do 'to be ſaved?' which doth ſuppoſe, that he apprehendeth a poſſibility of being ſaved, elſe he would not propound the queſtion. He applieth that or the like word to himſelf, 'It may be, ye ſhall 'be hid in the day of the Lord's anger,' Zeph. ii. 3. He findeth nothing excluding him from mercy now, if he have a heart for the thing. Although here, it may be, the man doth not perceive, that it is the Lord who upholdeth, yet afterwards he can tell, That 'when his foot 'was ſlipping, God's mercy held him 'up;' as Pſal. xciv. 17. 18. the pſalmiſt ſpeaketh in another caſe. And he will afterwards ſay, When he 'was as a 'beaſt, and a fool,' in many reſpects, 'God held him by the hand,' Pſal. lxxiii. 22. 23.

5. After

5. After this diſcovery of a poſſibility to be ſaved, there is a work of deſire quickened in the ſoul; which is clear in that ſame expreſſion, 'What ſhall I do 'to be ſaved?' But ſometimes this deſire is airted amiſs, whilſt it goeth out thus, 'What ſhall I do that I may work the 'works of God?' John vi. 28. In which caſe, the man formerly perplexed with fear and care about his ſalvation, would be at ſome work of his own to extricate himſelf: and here he ſuddenly reſolveth to do all that is commanded, and to forego every evil way, (yet much miſkenning Chriſt Jeſus), and ſo beginneth to take ſome courage to himſelf again, 'eſtabliſhing his own righteouſneſs, but 'not ſubmitting unto the righteouſneſs 'of God,' Rom. x. 3. Whereupon the Lord maketh a new aſſault on him, intending the diſcovery of his abſolutely broken ſtate in himſelf, that ſo room may be made for the Cautioner; as Joſhua did to the people, when he found them ſo bold in their undertakings, Joſh. xxiv. 18. 19. 'You cannot ſerve the 'Lord,' ſaith he, 'for he is a holy God, 'a jealous God,' *&c.* In this new aſſault the Lord, (1.) Bends up againſt the man, the ſpirituality of the law; the com-

mandment cometh with a new charge in the spiritual meaning of it, Rom. vii. 9. 'The law came,' saith Paul, *viz.* in the spiritual meaning of it; Paul had never seen such a sight of the law before. (2.) God most holily doth loose the restraining bonds, which he had laid upon the man's corruption, and suffereth it not only to boil and swell within, but to threaten to break out in all the outward members. Thus sin groweth bold, and kicketh at the law, becoming exceeding sinful, Rom. vii. 8. 9. 'But sin 'taking occasion by the commandment, 'wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was 'dead. For I was alive without the law 'once: but when the commandment 'came, sin revived, and I died. vers. '13. Was then that which is good, 'made death unto me? God-forbid. 'But sin, that it might appear sin, 'working death in me by that which 'is good; that sin by the command-'ment might become exceeding sinful.' (3.) The Lord doth discover to the man, more now than ever before, the uncleanness of his righteousness, and what spots are in his best things. These things kill the man, and he dieth in his own conceit,

Rom.

Rom. vii. 9. and deſpaireth of relief in himſelf, if it come not from another airth.

6. After many ups and downs here, ordinarily, the man reſolveth ſome retirement; he deſireth to be alone, he cannot keep company as before; like thoſe who in a beſieged city, when they ſee they cannot hold out, and would be glad of any good condition from the beſieging enemy, they go to a council, that they may reſolve ſomewhat. So the man here retireth, that he may ſpeak with himſelf. This is like that communing with our own heart, Pſal. iv. 4. Thus God leadeth to the wilderneſs, that he may ſpeak to the heart, Hoſ. ii. 14. When the perſon is retired, the thoughts of heart, which were ſcattered in former ſteps of the exerciſe, do more obſervably throng in here. We ſhall reduce them into this method. (1.) The man thinks of his unhappy folly, in bearing arms againſt God; and here there be large thoughts of former ways, with a bluſhing countenance, and ſelf-lothing, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. 'Then ſhall ye remember 'your own evil ways, and your doings 'that were not good, and ſhall lothe 'yourſelves in your own ſight,' *&c.* like that of Pſal. li. 3. 'His ſin is ever

'before

'before him.' (2.) Then he remembereth how fair opportunities of yielding to God he hath basely lost; his Spirit is like to faint when he remembereth that, as is said in another case, Psal. xlii. 4. 5. 6. 'When I remember these things, I 'pour out my soul in me.----Why art 'thou cast down, O my soul? why art 'thou disquieted in me?---O my God, 'my soul is cast down within me.'---- (3.) He now thinks of many Christians, whom he mocked and despised in his heart, persuading himself now that they are happy, as having chosen the better part; he thinks of the condition of those who wait on Christ, as the queen of Sheba did of Solomon's servants: 'Happy are thy servants,' saith she, 'who 'stand continually before thee, and that 'hear thy wisdom,' 1 Kings x. 8. 'Blessed are they that dwell in thy house,' *&c.* Psal. lxxxiv. 4. He wisheth to be one of the meanest who have any relation to God, as the prodigal son doth speak, he would be as one of the Father's hired servants, Luke xv. 17. 19. (4.) Then he calleth to mind the good report that is gone abroad of God, according to that testimony, Jonah iv. 2. the prophet knew that God was 'a gracious God and 'merciful,

'merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great 'kindneſs,' *&c.* The free and large promiſes and offers of grace come in here; and the glorious practices which have paſſed upon ſinners of all ſorts, according to the fame of God in ſcripture. (5.) He thinks with himſelf, Why hath God ſpared me ſo long? and why have I got ſuch a ſight of my ſin? and why hath he kept me from breaking priſon at my own hand, in chooſing ſome unhappy outgate? why hath he made this ſtrange change on me? It may be it is in his heart to do me good: O that it may be ſo!----Although all theſe thoughts be not in the preparatory work of every one, yet they are with many, and very promiſing where they are.

7. Upon all theſe thoughts and meditations the man more ſeriouſly than ever before, reſolveth to pray, and to make ſome eſſay with God, upon life and death; he concludeth, 'it can be 'no worſe with him; for if he ſit ſtill, 'he periſheth,' as the lepers ſpeak, 2 Kings vii. 3. 4. He conſidereth, with the pinched prodigal ſon, that 'there is 'bread enough in the Father's houſe, 'and to ſpare, whilſt he periſheth for 'want:' ſo he goeth to God, for he knoweth

knoweth not what elſe to make of his condition, as the prodigal ſon doth, Luke xv. 17. 18. And, it may be, here he reſolveth what to ſpeak; but readily things do vary when he is ſiſted before God, as the prodigal ſon forgot ſome of his premeditated prayers, Luke xv. 18. 19. 21. 'I will ariſe, and go to my fa-'ther, and will ſay unto him, Father, 'I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and be-'fore thee, and am no more worthy to 'be called thy ſon: make me as one of 'thy hired ſervants. And he aroſe, and 'came unto his father, and ſaid unto 'him, Father, I have ſinned againſt 'Heaven, and in thy ſight, and am no 'more worthy to be called thy ſon.'

And now, when he cometh before God, more obſervably than ever before, (1.) He beginneth with the publican afar off, Luke xviii. 13. with many through-confeſſions and ſelf-condemnings, whereof he is very liberal, as Luke xv. 21. 'I have ſinned againſt Heaven, 'and before thee, and am no more wor-'thy,' *&c.* (2) Now begin his thoughts anent the hearing of his prayer, which he was not wont to queſtion much; he now knows what thoſe expreſſions of the ſaints, anent the hearing of their prayers, do

do import. (3.) It is obſervable in this addreſs, that there are many broken ſentences, like that of Pſal. vi. 3. 'But 'thou, O Lord, how long?' ſupplied with ſighs and groanings which cannot be uttered, Rom. viii. 26. and greedy looking upward, thereby ſpeaking more than can be well expreſſed by words. (4.) There be ordinarily ſome interruptions, and, as it were, diverſions, the man ſpeaking ſometimes to the enemy, ſometimes to his own heart, ſometimes to the multitude in the world, as David doth in other caſes, Pſal. ix. 6. 'O 'thou enemy, deſtructions are come to 'a perpetual end.' Pſal. xlii. 5. 'Why 'art thou caſt down, O my ſoul, and 'why art thou diſquieted in me? hope 'thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe 'him for the help of his countenance.' Pſal. iv. 2. 'O ye ſons of men, how 'long will ye turn my glory into 'ſhame?' (5.) It is obſervable here, that ſometimes the man will halt and be ſilent to hear ſome indiſtinct whiſpering of a joyful ſound glancing on the mind, or ſome news in ſome broken word of ſcripture, which, it may be, the man ſcarcely knoweth to be ſcripture, or whether it is come from God, or Satan

tan to delude him; yet this he hath resolved, only to 'hear what God the 'Lord will speak,' as upon another occasion, Psal. lxxxv. 8. (6.) More distinct promises come into the man's mind, whereupon he essayeth to lay hold, but is beatten off with objections, as in another case the psalmist is, Psal. xxii. 3. 6. 'But thou art holy. But I 'am a worm.' Now it is about the dawning of the day with the man, and faith will stir assoon as the Lord imparteth the joyful sound, Psal. lxxxix. 15. This is the substance of the covenant, which may be shortly summed up in these words, 'Christ Jesus is my beloved 'Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear 'ye him.'

We can speak no further of the man's exercise, as a preparatory work; for, what followeth is more than preparatory. Yet that the exercise may appear complete and full, we shall add here, That after all these things, the Lord, it may be, after many answers of divers sorts, mightily conveyeth the sound of his covenant into the heart, and determineth the heart to close with it; and God now draweth so to Christ, John vi. 44. and so shapeth out the heart for him, that

that the conception cannot miscarry; for now the heart is so in breadth and length for him, as that less cannot satisfy, and more is not desired, like that of Psal. lxxiii. 25. 'Whom have I in hea-'ven but thee? or whom have I desired 'on earth beside thee?' The soul now resolveth to die, if he command so, yet at his door, and facing to him-wards.

We have drawn this preparatory work to some length, not tying any man to such a work so circumstantiated, only, we say, the Lord dealeth so with some; and where he so convinceth of sin, corruption, and self-emptiness, and maketh a man take salvation to heart, as the one thing necessary; and setteth him on work in the use of the means which God hath appointed for relief; I say, such a work rarely shall be found to fail of a good issue and gracious result.

CHAP. VI.

The difference betwixt that preparatory law-work which hath a gracious issue, and the convictions of hypocrites.

Object. HYpocrites and reprobates have great stirrings of conscience, and deep convictions about

ſin, ſetting them on work ſometimes, and I do ſuſpect any preparatory work of the law I ever had, to be but ſuch as they have.

Anſw. It will be hard to give ſure eſſential differences between the preparatory work in thoſe in whom afterwards Chriſt is formed, and thoſe legal ſtirrings, which are ſometimes in reprobates: if there were not ſome gracious reſult of theſe convictions and wakenings of conſcience in the Lord's people, and other marks of which we ſhall ſpeak afterwards, it were hard to adventure upon any difference that is clear in theſe legal ſtirrings. Yet, for anſwer to the objection, I ſhall offer ſome things, which rarely will be found in the ſtirrings of reprobates, and which are ordinarily found in that law-work which hath a gracious iſſue.

1. The convictions of hypocrites and reprobates, are uſually confined to ſome few very groſs tranſgreſſions. Saul grants no more but the perſecuting of David, 1 Sam. xxvi. 21. Judas grants only the betraying of innocent blood, Matth. xxvii. 4. But uſually thoſe convictions, by which the Lord prepareth his own way in the ſoul, although

though they may begin at one or more groſs particular tranſgreſſions, yet they ſiſt not, but the man is led on to ſee many breaches of the law, and 'innu-'merable evils compaſſing him,' as David ſpeaketh in the ſight of his ſin, Pſal. xl. 12.: and withal, that univerſal conviction, if I may call it ſo, is not general, as uſually we hear ſenſeleſs men ſaying, 'that in all things they ſin;' but it is particular and condeſcending, as Paul afterwards ſpake of himſelf; he not only is the 'chief of ſinners,' but particularly, he was 'a blaſphemer, a 'perſecutor,' 1 Tim. i. 13.

2. The convictions which hypocrites have, do ſeldom reach their corruption, and that body of death, which breeds an averſeneſs from what is good, and ſtrongly inclineth to what is evil. Ordinarily where we find hypocrites ſpeaking of themſelves in ſcripture, they ſpeak loftily and with ſome ſelf-conceit, both as to their freedom from corruption, John ix. 34. the Phariſees ſay to the poor man, 'Thou waſt altogether 'born in ſins, and doſt thou teach us? as if they themſelves were not as corrupt by nature as he; they ſpeak of great ſins, as Hazael did, 2 Kings viii.

13. 'Am I a dog that I should do this 'great thing?' and also in their undertakings of duty, as that scribe spake, Matth. viii. 19. 'Master, I will follow thee 'whithersoever thou goest.' See how the people do speak, Jer. xlii. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. they undertake to do all that God will command them: so that they still 'go 'about,' in any case, 'to establish their 'own righteousness, not submitting un-'to the righteousness of God,' Rom. x. 3. But I may say, that convictions and exercise about corruption, and that body of death, inclining to evil, and disenabling for good, is not the least part of the work where the Lord is preparing his own way. They use to judge themselves very wretched because of a body of sin, and are at their wits end how to be delivered, as Paul speaketh when he is under the exercise of it afterwards, Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I 'am, who shall deliver me from the 'body of this death!'

3. It will ordinarily be found, that the convictions which are in hypocrites, either are not so serious, as that some other business will not put them out of head before any satisfaction be gotten, as in Cain, who went and built a city,

and

and we hear no more of his convictions, Gen. iv. Felix went away until a more convenient time, and we hear no more of his trembling, Acts xxiv. 25.: or if that work become very serious, then it runneth to the other extremity, and despair of relief, leaving no room for any outgate. So we find Judas very serious in his convictions, yet he grew desperate and hanged himself, Matth. xxvii. 4. 5. But where the Lord prepareth his own way, the work is both so serious, as the person cannot be put off it, until he find some satisfaction; and yet under that very seriousness he lieth open for relief: both which are clear in the jailor's words, 'What must I do to be saved?' Acts xvi. 30. This serious inquiry after relief, is a very observable thing in the preparatory work which leadeth on to Christ. Yet we desire none to lay too much weight on these things, since God hath allowed clear differences between the precious and the vile.

Object. I still fear I have not had so thorough a sight of my sin and misery, as the Lord giveth to many whom he effectually calleth, especially to great transgressors, such as I am.

Answ. It is true, the Lord discovereth

to some great sights of their sin and misery, and they are thereby put under great legal terrors: but as all are not brought in by that sensible preparatory law-work, as we shewed before; so even those who are dealt with after that way, are very differently and variously exercised, in regard of the degrees of terror, and of the continuance of that work. The jailor hath a violent work of very short continuance; Paul hath a work continuing three days; some persons are in bondage through fear of death all their days, Heb. ii. 15. So that we must not limit the Lord to one way of working here. The main thing we are to look unto in these legal wakenings and convictions of sin and misery, is, if the Lord reach those ends in us, for which usually these stirrings and convictions are sent into the soul; and if those ends be reached, it is well, we are not to vex ourselves about any preparatory work further. Now, those ends which God driveth ordinarily with sinners, by these legal terrors and wakenings of conscience, are four.

First, The Lord discovers sights of mens sin and misery to them, to chase them out of themselves, and to put them out

out of conceit of their own righteousness. Men naturally have great thoughts of themselves, and do incline much to the covenant of works: the Lord therefore doth discover to them so much of their sin and corruption, even in their best things, that they are made to lothe themselves, and to despair of relief in themselves; and so they are forced to flee out of themselves, and from the covenant of works, to seek refuge elsewhere, Heb. vi. 18. They become dead to themselves and the law, as to the point of justification, Rom. vii. 4. Then have they no more confidence in the flesh, Phil. iii. 3. This is supposed in the offers of Christ, coming to seek and save that which is lost, Luke xix. 10. and to be a Physician to those who are sick, Matth. ix. 12.

The *second* great end is, to commend Christ Jesus to mens hearts above all things, that so they may fall in love with him, and betake themselves to that treasure and jewel, which only enricheth, Matth. xiii. 44. 46. and, by so doing, may serve the Lord's design in the contrivement of the gospel, which was the manifestation of his free grace through Christ Jesus in the salvation of men.

The

The sight of a man's own misery and damnable estate by nature, is a ready way to make him prize Christ highly, who alone can set such a wretch at liberty: yea, it not only leadeth a man to an high esteem of Christ, but also of all things that relate to that way of salvation, as grace, the new covenant, faith, *&c.* and maketh him carefully to gather and treasure up his Michtams, or golden scriptures, for the confirmation of his interest in these things.

The *third* great end is, To deter and scare people from sin, and to make them cast out with it, and consent to put their neck under all his yoke. God kindleth some sparks of hell in mens bosoms by the discovery of their sin, as a ready mean to make them henceforth stand in awe, knowing how bitter a thing it is to depart from the Lord, Jer. ii. 19. So we find rest offered to the weary, upon condition they will take on Christ's yoke, Matth. xi. 29. 'Take my yoke upon you, 'and learn of me, for I am meek and 'lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest 'unto your souls.' And God offereth to own men, as their God and Father, upon condition they will allow no peaceable abode to Belial, 2 Cor. vi. 14. 15. 17.

17. 18. 'What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what 'communion hath light with darkness? 'and what concord hath Christ with 'Belial? or what part hath he that believeth, with an infidel? Wherefore 'come out from among them, and be 'ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch 'not the unclean thing; and I will 'receive you, and will be a Father 'unto you, and ye shall be my sons 'and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'

The *fourth* great end is, To work up men to a patient and thankful submission to all the Master's pleasure. This is a singular piece of work, Ezek. xvi. 63. 'Then shalt thou remember and 'be confounded and never open thy 'mouth any more because of thy shame, 'when I am pacified toward thee for 'all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.' The sight of a man's own vileness and deservings, maketh him silent, and to lay his hand on his mouth, whatsoever God doth unto him, Psal. xxxix. 9. 'I 'was dumb, and opened not my mouth; 'because thou didst it.' Ezra ix. 13. 'God hath punished us less than our iniquities.' Micah vii. 9. 'I will bear the 'indignation

'indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have 'ſinned.' The man careth not what God doth to him, or how he deal with him, if he ſave him from the deſerved wrath to come. Alſo any mercy is a large mercy to him, who hath ſeen ſuch a ſight of himſelf; he is leſs that the leaſt of mercies, Gen. xxxii. 10. Any crumb falling from the Maſter's table is welcome, Matth. xv. 27. He thinks it rich mercy that he is not conſumed, Lam. iii. 22. This is the thing that marvellouſly maketh God's poor croſſed people ſo ſilent under, and ſatisfied with their lot; nay, they think he deſerveth hell who openeth his mouth at any thing God doth to him, ſince he hath pardoned his tranſgreſſions.

So then, for ſatisfying the objection, I ſay, if the Lord hath driven thee out of thyſelf, and commended Chriſt to thy heart above all things, and made thee reſolve, on his ſtrength, to wage war with every known tranſgreſſion; and thou art, in ſome meaſure, as a weaned child, acquieſcing in what he doth unto thee, deſiring to lay thy hand on thy mouth thankfully; then thy convictions of ſin and miſery, and whatſoever thou doſt plead as a preparatory work, is ſufficient,

cient, and thou art to debate no more anent it: only be adviſed to ſtudy new diſcoveries of the ſenſe of thy loſt condition every day, becauſe of thy old and new ſins; and alſo to ſee freſh help in Chriſt, who is a Prieſt for ever to make interceſſion; and to have the work of ſanctification and patience with thankfulneſs renewed and quickened often: for ſomewhat of that work which abaſeth thee, exalteth Chriſt, and conformeth to his will, muſt convey thee throughout all thy lifetime in this world.

CHAP. VII.

Of faith.

WE come now to ſpeak of ſome more clear and ſure marks, by which men may take up their gracious ſtate and intereſt in Chriſt. The *firſt* thing whereby men may know it, is, their cloſing with Chriſt in the goſpel, wherein he is held forth. This is believing, or faith, which is the condition of the covenant, Rom. iv. 16. 'It is of 'faith,' &c. Acts xvi. 31. 'Believe on 'the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt 'be ſaved.' Now, although in propriety of

of ſpeech, it is hard to prove an intereſt by faith, it being our very intereſt in him; yet the heart's cloſing with Chriſt Jeſus is ſo diſcernible in itſelf, that we may well place it amongſt the marks of a gracious ſtate: and if a man can make out this, that he believeth on and in Chriſt Jeſus, he thereby doth prove a very true intereſt in him.

Many do ſcare at this, as a mark, upon one of theſe three grounds ordinarily.

1. Some conceive faith to be a difficult myſterious thing, hardly attainable. To theſe I ſay, Do not miſtake, faith is not ſo difficult as many do apprehend it to be: I grant true faith in the meaneſt degree is the gift of God, and above the power of fleſh and blood; for God muſt draw men to Chriſt, John vi. 44. 'No 'man can come to me, except the Father 'which hath ſent me, draw him.' Phil. i. 29. 'Unto you it is given in the be-'half of Chriſt, to believe on him.' Yet it were a reflection upon Chriſt, and all he hath done, to ſay it were a matter of inſuperable difficulty; as is clear, Rom. x. 6. 11. 'The righteouſneſs which 'is of faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe, Say 'not in thine heart, Who ſhall aſcend 'into

'into heaven? (that is to bring Christ 'down from above): or, Who shall de- 'scend into the deep? (that is to bring 'up Christ again from the dead). But 'what saith it? The word is nigh thee, 'even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: 'that is the word of faith which we 'preach, That if thou shalt confess with 'thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt 'believe in thine heart, that God hath 'raised him from the dead, thou shalt 'be saved. For with the heart man be- 'lieveth unto righteousness, and with 'the mouth confession is made unto sal- 'vation. For the scripture saith, Who- 'soever believeth on him, shall not be 'ashamed.' It were, according to that scripture, as much upon the matter as to say, Christ came not from heaven, is not risen from the dead, or ascended victorious to heaven. I say, He hath made the way to heaven most easy; and faith, which is the condition required on our part, more easy than men do imagine. For the better understanding of this, consider that justifying faith is not to believe that I am elected, or to believe that God loveth me, or that Christ died for me, or the like; these things are indeed very difficult, and al-

most impossible at the first hand to be won at by those who are serious; whilst natural Atheists, and deluded hypocrites, find no difficulty in asserting all those things: I say, true justifying faith is not any of the foresaid things; neither is it simply the believing of any sentence that is written, or that can be thought upon. I grant, he that believeth on Christ Jesus, believeth what God hath said anent man's sinful, miserable condition by nature, and he believeth that to be true, That 'there is life in the 'Son, who was slain, and is risen again 'from the dead,' *&c.* But none of these, nor the believing of many such truths, do speak out justifying faith, or that believing on the Son of God, spoken of in scripture; for then it were simply an act of the understanding: but true justifying faith, which we now seek after, as a good mark of an interest in Christ, is chiefly and principally an act or work of the heart and will; having presupposed sundry things about truth in the understanding, with the heart it is believed unto righteousness, Rom. x. 10. And although it seem, vers. 9. of that chapter, that a man is saved upon condition that he believe this truth, 'God

'raised

'raised Christ from the dead;' yet we must understand another thing there, and vers. 10. than the believing the truth of that proposition: for, beside that all devils have that faith whereby they believe that God raised Christ from the dead; so the scripture hath clearly resolved justifying faith into a *receiving* of Christ, John i. 12. 'As many as received him, to them gave he 'power to become the sons of God, even 'to them that believe on his name.' The receiving of Christ is there explained to be the *believing on his name*. It is still called a *staying on the Lord*, Is. xxvi. 3. a *trusting in God*, often mentioned in the Psalms, and the word is a leaning on him. It is a *believing on Christ*, John vi. 29. 'This is the work 'of God, that ye believe on him whom 'he hath sent,' and often so expressed in the New Testament. When God maketh men believe savingly, he is said to draw them unto Christ; and when the Lord inviteth them to believe, he calleth them to come to him, John vi. 37. 44. 'All that the Father giveth me, 'shall come to me; and him that co- 'meth to me, I will in no wise cast out. 'No man can come to me, except the

'Father which hath sent me, draw him.' The kingdom of heaven is like a man finding a jewel, wherewith he falleth in love, Matth. xiii. 44. 45. 46. Now, I say, this acting of the heart on Christ Jesus, is not so difficult a thing as is conceived. Shall that be judged a mysterious difficult thing, which doth consist much in desire? If men have but an appetite, they have it; for they are blessed that hunger after righteousness, Matth. v. 6. If you will, you are welcome, Rev. xxii. 17. Is it a matter of such intricacy and insuperable difficulty, greedily to look to that exalted Saviour? Is. xlv. 22. 'Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth;' and to receive a thing that is offered, held forth, and declared to be mine, if I will but accept and take it, and in a manner open my mouth, and give way to it? Psal. lxxxi. 10. 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' Such a thing is faith, if not less. Oh! if I could persuade people what is justifying faith, which impropriateth Christ to me! We often scare people from their just rest and quiet, by making them apprehend faith to be some deep mysterious thing, and by moving unnecessary doubts about

bout it, whereby it is needleſsly darkened.

2. Some make no uſe of this mark, as judging it a high preſumptuous crime to pretend to ſo excellent a thing as is the very condition of the new covenant. To theſe I ſay, You need not ſtartle ſo much at it, as if it were high pride to pretend to it: for whatſoever true faith be, men muſt reſolve to have it, or nothing at all, all other marks are in vain without it; a thouſand things beſides will not do the buſineſs: unleſs a man believe, he abideth in the ſtate of condemnation, John iii. 18. 36. 'He that 'believeth not, is condemned already, 'becauſe he hath not believed in the 'name of the only begotten Son of God. 'He that believeth not the Son, ſhall 'not ſee life; but the wrath of God a-'bideth on him.'

3. Others do not meddle with this noble mark of faith, becauſe they judge it a work of the greateſt difficulty, to find out faith where it is. To theſe I ſay, It is not ſo difficult to find it out, ſince 'he that believeth, hath the wit-'neſs in himſelf,' 1 John v. 10. It is a thing which by ſome ſerious ſearch may be known. Not only may we do

much to find it out by the preparatory work going before it in many, as the apprehending and believing of a man's loſt eſtate, and that he cannot do his own buſineſs, and that there is ſatisfying fulneſs in Chriſt, very deſirable if he could overtake it; a ſerious minding of this, with a heart laid open for relief; as alſo by the ordinary companions and concomitants of it, *viz.* the liking of Chriſt's dominion, his kingly and prophetical office, a deſire to reſign myſelf wholly up to him, to be at his diſpoſing: as alſo by the native conſequences of it, *viz.* the aſſoilzing of the word, the aſſoilzing of my own conſcience according to the word, a heart-purifying work, a working by love, *&c.*: I ſay, not only may we know faith by theſe things, but it is diſcernible by itſelf and of its own nature; although I deny not, but there muſt be ſome help of God's Spirit, by which we know what is freely given unto us of God, 1 Cor. ii. 12.; as alſo, that God hath allowed many evidences and marks, as precious helps, whereby men may clear up faith more fully to themſelves, 1 John v. 13. 'Theſe things have I written un-
'to you that believe on the name of the
'Son

'Son of God, that ye may know that 'ye have eternal life.' Yet I ſtill ſay, that faith, or believing, which is ſome acting of the heart upon Chriſt in the goſpel, and the tranſacting with him there, is diſcernible of itſelf, and by itſelf, to a judicious underſtanding perſon, with an ordinary influence of the Spirit; unleſs the Lord, for reaſons known to himſelf, do overcloud a man's reflex light, by which he ſhould take up and perceive what is in him.

This juſtifying faith, which we aſſert to be ſo diſcernible, is, in the Lord's deep wiſdom and gracious condeſcendency, variouſly expreſſed in ſcripture, according to the different actings of it upon God, and outgoings after him, ſo as every one who hath it, may find and take it up in his own mould. It ſometimes acteth by a deſire of union with him in Chriſt: this is that *looking* to him in Iſ. xlv. 22. 'Look unto me, and 'be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth.' This ſeems to be a weak act of faith, and far below other actings of it at other times, perhaps in that ſame perſon. Men will look to what they dare not approach, to their apprehenſion, which they dare not touch or embrace; they may

may look to one to whom they dare not speak: yet God hath made the promise to faith in that acting, as the forecited scripture doth shew; and this he hath done mercifully and wisely, for this is the only discernible way of the acting of faith of some persons sometimes. Such are the actings or outgoings of faith expressed in scripture, by *hungering and thirsting after righteousness*, Matth. v. 6.; and that expressed by *willing*, Rev. xxii. 17. 'And whosoever will, 'let him take the water of life freely.'

Again, this faith goeth out sometimes in the act of recumbency, or leaning on the Lord, the soul taking up Christ then as a resting-stone, and God hath so held him out, although he be a stumbling-stone to others, Rom. ix. 33. This acting of it is hinted in the expressions of *trusting*, and *staying* on God, so often mentioned in scripture; and precious promises are made to this acting of faith, as Is. xxvi. 3. 4. 'God will keep 'them in perfect peace, whose minds are 'stayed on him; because such do trust 'in him. Trust in the Lord; for with 'him is everlasting strength.' So, Psal. cxxv. 1. 'They that trust in the Lord, 'shall be as mount Zion, which abideth

'for

'for ever.' I ſay, the Lord hath made promiſes to this way of faith's acting, as knowing it will often go out after him in this way with many perſons; and this way of its acting will be moſt diſcernible to them.

It goeth out after God ſometimes by an act of waiting, when the ſoul hath ſomewhat depending before God, and hath not got out his mind ſatisfyingly anent that thing; then faith doth wait, and ſo it hath the promiſe, Iſ. xlix. 23. 'They ſhall not be aſhamed that wait 'for me.' Sometimes it acteth in a wilful way upon the Lord, when the ſoul apprehendeth God thruſting it away, and threatening its ruin; ſo, Job xiii. 15. 'Though he ſlay me, yet will I 'truſt in him.' The faith of that poor woman of Canaan, Matth. xv. 22.--28. ſo highly commended by Chriſt, did go out in this way of wilful acting over difficulties; and the Lord ſpeaketh much good of it, and to it, becauſe ſome will be put to it, to exerciſe faith that way ſometimes, and ſo they have that for their encouragement. It were tedious to inſtance all the ſeveral ways of the acting of faith upon, and its exerciſe about, and outgoing after Chriſt. I may

ſay,

ſay, according to the various conditions and preſſures of the ſoul of man, the Lord hath variouſly held out himſelf and his fulneſs in Chriſt under divers notions, as might moſt fitly meet the diſtreſs or condition of man. And accordingly, faith, which God hath appointed to traffic and travel between Chriſt and man, as the inſtrument of conveyance of his fulneſs unto man, and of maintaining union and communion with him, acteth variouſly and differently upon God in Chriſt: for faith is the very ſhaping out of a man's heart according to God's device of ſalvation by Chriſt Jeſus, in whom it pleaſed the Father that fulneſs ſhould dwell; ſo that let Chriſt turn what way he will, faith airteth and pointeth that way. Now he turneth all ways in which he can be uſeful to poor man, and therefore faith acteth accordingly on him for drawing out of that fulneſs, according to a man's caſe and condition. As for example, the ſoul is naked, deſtitute of a covering to keep it from the ſtorm of God's wrath; Chriſt is fine raiment, Rev. iii. 17. 18.: then accordingly faith's work here is to put on the Lord Jeſus, Gal. iii. 27. The

ſoul

soul is hungry and thirsty after somewhat that may everlastingly satisfy; Christ Jesus is milk, wine, water, the bread of life, and the true manna, Is. lv. 1. 2. John vi. 48.---51.; he is the feast of fat things, and of wine refined, Is. xxv. 6.: then the work and exercise of faith is, to go, buy, eat and drink abundantly, Is. lv. 1. John vi. 53.---57. The soul is pursued for guilt more or less, and is not law-biding; Christ Jesus is the city of refuge, and the High Priest there, during whose lifetime, that is, for ever, the poor man who wins thither, is safe: then the work and exercise of faith is, to flee thither for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us, Heb. vi. 18. In a word, whatsoever way he may benefit poor man, so he speaketh of himself: and as he holdeth out himself in the scripture, so faith doth point towards him. If he be a Bridegroom, faith will go out in a marriage-relation; if he be a Father, faith pleadeth the man to be a child; if he be a Shepherd, faith pleads the man may be one of his sheep; if he be a Lord, faith calleth him so, which none can do but by the Spirit of Jesus, 1 Cor. xii. 3.; if he be dead, and risen again for our justification,

justification, faith believeth God hath raised him on that account, Rom. x. 9. Wheresoever he be, there would faith be; and whatsoever he is, faith would be somewhat proportionally: for, by faith the heart is shapen out in breadth and length for him; yea, when the fame and report of him goeth abroad in his truth, although faith seeth not much, yet it believeth on his name, upon the very fame he hath sent abroad of himself, John i. 12.

But here, for avoiding of mistakes, consider, (1.) That although justifying faith acteth so variously, yet every believer, who hath a good title to Christ Jesus, hath not all these various actings and exercises of faith; for his condition craveth them not: and also the Master is pleased not to lead out the faith of some persons at some times in some of these ways, for reasons known to himself, even when their necessity (to their apprehension) calleth for such acting of faith. Surely, every one dare not say, 'Though he kill me, yet will I trust in 'him.' Many would not have gone up with the woman of Canaan I spake of, Matth. xv. but would have been discouraged, and have quit the pursuit. It is

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on this account that Chriſt doth highly commend the faith of ſome beyond the faith of others; Matth. viii. 10. of the Centurion; Matth. xv. 28. of the woman of Canaan. Many good people are much diſquieted anent their faith, becauſe it goeth not out in all thoſe ways we find recorded in ſcripture; but there is hardly any man will be found, whoſe faith hath acted all theſe ways.

2. Many of theſe actings of faith are much intended and remitted. They are ſometimes ſtrong and vigorous, and diſcernible; and ſometimes they fail, and miſbelief doth prevail; ſo as it were an uncertain thing to judge of a man's ſtate by theſe. We find the ſaints very different from themſelves in regard of the actings of faith ſometimes, as we ſhewed before.

3. Each one of theſe actings of faith ſpeaketh good to the perſon in whom it is, and hath promiſes annexed unto it, as we have ſaid. Yet,

4. Although theſe actings of faith have promiſes annexed unto them, they are not, for that, the condition of the new covenant; for then every one behoved to have each one of them, which is not true, as we ſaid before. A promiſe

is made to him who overcometh; but perseverance is not the condition of the new covenant, but doth suppose it. There are promises made to the exercise of all graces, in scripture; but only faith is the condition of the covenant. I say then, these promises are made to these actings of faith, not as such, but as they do suppose justifying faith, which is the condition of the covenant. All these are actings of faith, but not as it is justifying. Therefore,

5. There is somewhat common to all gracious persons, which may be supposed by all the foresaid actings of faith, wherein the nature and essence of justifying faith standeth. And this is the heart's satisfaction anent God's device of salvation by Christ; when man pleaseth God's invention of satisfaction to justice, through Christ Jesus, in whom all fulness doth dwell now by the Father's pleasure; when the soul and heart of man acquiesceth in that, then it believeth unto salvation. As at first the Lord made man suitable to the covenant of works, by creating him perfect, and so putting him in a capacity to perform his will in that covenant, so under the new covenant, when God giveth the

new

new heart to man, he setteth the idea and stamp of all his device in the new covenant upon the man, so as there is a consonancy to God's will there: thus he beareth the image of the second Adam, Christ Jesus, on him. This is a great part of the new heart, and is most opposed to works; since now the man absolutely falleth off works, 'becoming 'dead to the law,' as to the point of justification, 'by the body of Christ,' Rom. vii. 4. Man perceiving that God hath devised a way of satisfying divine justice, and recovering lost man by the incarnation of Christ, he thinks this so good and sure a way, that he absolutely giveth up with the law, as I said before, and closeth with this device: and this is believing or faith, very opposite to works and all resting thereupon. This cannot fail to be in all gracious persons, in whom many of the actings of faith are not to be found. This doth clearly suppose known distress in a man, without all relief in himself; this supposeth known fulness in Christ, as the alone sufficient relief; this imports a sort of impropriation: for the heart, pleasing that device, in so far swayeth towards it. This is a thing clearly sup-

posed in all the actings of faith, spoken of before. He that greedily hungereth, hath this; and he that leaneth, hath this; and he that puts on Christ, hath this, *&c.* This is to esteem Christ 'the 'wisdom and power of God' to salvation; so is he said to be to all that believe, 1 Cor. i. 24. They esteem that device wise and sure, beseeming God; and that is to believe On this account, Christ, who is the rejected stone to many, is precious to them who believe; a fit stone to recover, fortify, and beautify the tottering building and fabric of lost man. 'To whom coming, as unto 'a living stone, disallowed indeed of 'men, but chosen of God, and pre-'cious, ye also as lively stones, are built 'up a spiritual house, an holy priest-'hood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, 'acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 'Wherefore also it is contained in the 'scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief 'corner-stone, elect, precious: and he 'that believeth on him shall not be 'confounded. Unto you therefore 'which believe he is precious: but un-'to them which be disobedient, the 'stone which the builders disallowed, 'the same is made the head of the cor-'ner,

'ner, and a stone of stumbling, and a 'rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobe-'dient, whereunto also they were ap-'pointed,' 1 Pet. ii. 4.---8. 'The king-'dom of God is like a man finding a 'treasure, for which with joy he selleth 'all,' Matth. xiii. 44. These words hold out the very way of believing, *viz.* salvation is discovered in the gospel to be by Christ; the heart valueth that invention as satisfying. This is to believe on the Son of God lifted up; which is compared with the looking to the brazen serpent, John iii. 14. It was man's approbation of that device which made it effectual for his healing; so is it here, 'he that *so* believeth, setteth 'to his seal that God is true,' John iii. 33. True? wherein? In that record he hath borne, that God hath provided life for men, and placed it all in Christ, 1 John v. 10. 11. 'He that believeth 'not, maketh God a liar.' Wherein? In his saying that Christ is a safe and sure way to heaven. This is the pleasing and acquiescing in that device; and it is consonant to all I know spoken of justifying faith in scripture. This is the believing on Christ and on his name,

the receiving of him and resting on him for salvation, in our Catechism; the believing that Jesus is the Christ, that is, the anointed One, whom the Father hath sealed, and set apart, and qualified for the work of reconciling man unto God; and 'he that believeth that Jesus 'is the Christ, is born of God,' 1 John v. 1. This is to believe with the heart, that God hath raised Christ from the dead, Rom. x. 9. The man believeth Christ died, and is raised on the account of satisfaction for man's transgression. Devils may believe that: nay, but the man I speak of, believeth it with his heart, (which no natural man doth, until a new heart be given unto him), that is, he cordially pleaseth, is satisfied with, and acquiesceth in this noble invention. And this faith layeth out itself now and then in its actings, outgoings and exercise, according to all the covenant-relations under which Christ is held forth in the scripture.

Now, I say, this faith is discernible, not only in these actings many times; a man may know if his heart doth hunger after Christ, and flee for refuge to him, when pursued; and if he doth commit himself unto God, *&c.*; but also in its

its very nature: as it is justifying, it is discernible and may be known. A man may clearly know, if from known distress in himself, upon the report and fame of Christ's fulness, his heart doth please God's device in the new covenant; if it goeth out after Christ in that invention, and pleaseth him as Lord of the life of men, terminating and resting there, and no where else, acquiescing in that contrivement with desire and complacency.

This is a discernible thing: therefore I obtest men impartially to examine themselves, and if they find that their heart has closed so with that device of salvation, and is gone out after him as precious, that thereupon they conclude a sure and true interest in Christ Jesus, and a good claim and title to the crown, since 'he that believeth shall never perish, but 'have everlasting life,' John iii. 16. 36.

CHAP. VIII.

The difference between the faith of hypocrites, and true saving justifying faith.

Object. HYpocrites and reprobates have a sort of faith, and are said to believe, John ii. 23. 24. 'Many

'ny believed in his name, when they 'saw the miracles which he did; but 'Jesus did not commit himself unto 'them, because he knew all men;' Acts viii. 13. 'Then Simon, the sorcerer, him-'self believed also;' and cannot choose but go out after Christ, and that device of salvation, when they hear of it; and they profess they do so, yet are deluded, and so may I be.

Answ. To say nothing of that thought of your heart, (whereby you wonder that any man should not please the device of salvation by Christ, and lead out towards him), as a very promising thing, and speaking out justifying faith to be in your bosom; and, to say nothing in contradiction to that which you think, that a natural man, whilst such, and before he get a new heart, can please that device, and believe with his heart and affectionately, that which perfectly overthroweth the covenant of works, and abaseth man in the point of self-righteousness already attained, or that can be won at by him, which is inconsistent with many scriptural truths; I offer these differences between the faith of all hypocrites or reprobates, and that true saving

ving justifying faith, whereof we have spoken.

1. They never close with Christ Jesus in that device, and him alone as a sufficient covering of the eyes, as is said of Abraham to Sarah, Gen. xx. 16. They still hold fast somewhat of their own, at least to help to procure God's favour and salvation: their heart doth still speak, as that young man's speech, Luke xviii. 18. 21. doth insinuate, 'What shall I 'do to inherit eternal life?' Beside that, they do still retain their former lovers, and will not break their covenants with hell and death, imagining they may have Christ with these things equally sharing in their heart; contrary to that, 'A man 'cannot serve two masters,' Matth. vi. 24. Either Christ must be judged absolute Lord, and worthy to be so, or nothing at all. And so it is clear, their heart is not shapen out for that device of salvation by Christ, whom God hath alone made Lord here, in whom all fulness shall dwell. But where justifying faith is, the soul of a man and his heart doth close with Christ, and him alone, 'having no confidence in the flesh,' Phil. iii. 3. Psal. lxii. 5. 'He trusteth 'only in God.' Also the man here giveth

veth up with other lovers, as they compete with Chriſt, he reſolves not to be for another, Hoſ. iii. 3.; he calls him Lord, which a man can only do by the Spirit of Chriſt, 1 Cor. xii. 3.

2. As hypocrites and reprobates do never cloſe with Chriſt alone; ſo they do never cloſe with full Chriſt, as he is anointed to be a King, to rule over a man in all things; a Prieſt, to procure pardon, and to make peace for man upon all occaſions; a Prophet, to be wiſdom, and a teacher and counſeller in all caſes to man: ſo they do not receive Chriſt, eſpecially in the firſt and third office. But where true juſtifying faith is, a man cloſeth with whole Chriſt in all his offices. judging all his will good, holy, juſt, and ſpiritual, Rom. vii. 12. 14. and right concerning all things, Pſal. cxix. 128. making mention of his righteouſneſs only, Pſal. lxxi. 16.

The man alſo giveth up himſelf to be taught of him, Matth. xi. 29. 'Learn 'of me.' So that 'Chriſt is made' to the true believer, with his own conſent, 'wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, 'and complete redemption,' 1 Cor. i. 30. And although he hath not all theſe things formally in exerciſe, when his

his heart goeth out after Christ, yet, upon search and trial, it will be found with him, as I have said.

3. Hypocrites and reprobates do never close with Christ, and all the inconveniencies may follow him; they stick at that with the scribe, Matth. viii. 19. 20. But where true justifying faith is, a man doth close with him on all hazards; he resolveth to forego all, rather than to forego Christ. 'We have left all, 'and have followed thee,' Mark x. 28. He reckoneth all to be loss and dung for the excellency of Christ Jesus, as his Lord, and to be found in him, Phil. iii. 8.

We might give other differences also; as that true faith is operative, purifying the heart, Acts xv. 9. working by love, Gal. v. 6. whilst hypocrites do only cleanse the outside of the platter, Matth. xxiii. 25. and do all to be seen of men, Matth. vi. 5. not seeking the honour that is of God only, and so cannot believe, John v. 44. We might also shew, that true faith is never alone in a man, but attended with other saving graces: but because these things will coincide with what followeth; and here we are shewing that a man may take up his gracious state by his faith, and the acting

ing thereof on Christ; we pass these things.

CHAP. IX.

Of the new creature.

THE *second* great mark of a gracious state, and true saving interest in Jesus Christ, is the new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. 'If any man be in Christ, 'he is a new creature.' This new creation or renovation of that man, is a very sensible change, although not in those who are effectually called from the womb, or in their younger years; because those have had this new creature from that time in them, so as this change in after-periods of time is not discernible; yet in those who have been regenerated and brought in to Christ after they were come to greater age, and so have more palpably been under the power of darkness, before they were translated into the kingdom of Christ, Col. i. 13. But in all who do warrantably pretend to Christ, this new creature must be; although some do not know experimentally the contraries of every part of it, so as others do; because they have not been equally, in regard of practice, under

der the power of darkness. This new creature is called *the new man*, Col. iii. 10. which doth hold out the extent of it. It is not simply a new tongue, or new hand, but *a new man*. There is a principle of new life and motion put in the man, which is the new heart; which new principle of life sendeth forth acts of life, or of conformity to the image of him who created it, Col. iii. 10. so as the party is renewed in some measure every way. This renovation of the man who is in Christ, may be reduced into these two great heads.

First, There is a renovation of the man's person, soul and body, in some measure.

1. His understanding is renewed, so as he judgeth Christ preached in the gospel to be 'the wisdom and power of 'God,' a wise and strong device beseeming God, 1 Cor. i. 23. 24. He knoweth the things of God really and solidly, not to be yea and nay, and uncertain fancies; but all to be yea and amen, solid, certain, substantial things, having a desirable accomplishment in Christ, and resolving much in him, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 15. 'The natural man receiveth not 'the things of the Spirit of God: for

'they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither 'can he know them, becauſe they are 'ſpiritually diſcerned. But he that is 'ſpiritual, judgeth all things.' 2 Cor. i. 18. 19. 20. 'As God is true, our word 'toward you, was not yea and nay. For 'the Son of God Jeſus Chriſt, who was 'preached among you by us, even by 'me, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, 'was not yea and nay, but in him was 'yea. For all the promiſes of God in 'him are yea, and in him amen, unto 'the glory of God by us.' Natural men, educated under goſpel-ordinances, although they have ſome notional knowledge of God, Chriſt, the promiſes, the motions of the holy Spirit, *&c.* ſo as they may confer, preach, and diſpute of theſe things; yet they look on them as common received maxims of Chriſtianity, from which to recede were a ſingularity and diſgrace; but not as real, ſolid, ſubſtantial truths, ſo as to adventure their ſouls and everlaſting being on them. The underſtanding is renewed alſo, to take up ſomewhat of God in the creatures, as bearing ſparks of his glorious attributes, Pſal. xix. 1. they ſee the heavens declaring his glory and power; and ſomewhat of God in providence

vidence and diſpenſations that fall out; his wondrous works declare that his name is near, Pſal. lxxv. 1. The underſtanding alſo taketh up the conditions and caſes of the ſoul, otherwiſe than it was wont to do; as we find the ſaints uſually ſpeaking in ſcripture, 'O my ſoul, 'thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, Thou 'art my Lord,' Pſal. xvi. 2. 'My ſoul 'ſaid, Thy face will I ſeek,' Pſal. xxvii. 8. 'Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul?' Pſal. xlii. 5. Pſal. xliii. 5. 'Return un-'to thy reſt, O my ſoul,' Pſal. cxvi. 7.

2. The heart and affections are renewed. The heart is made a new heart, a heart of fleſh, capable of impreſſions, having a copy of his law ſtamped on it, and fear of God put into it, whereby the man's duty becometh in a manner native and kindly to the man, Jer. xxxii. 39. 40. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. It was before a heart of ſtone, void of the fear of God. The affections are renewed now. The love is renewed in ſome good meaſure; it goeth out after God, 'I will love the 'Lord,' Pſal. xviii. 1.; after his law, 'O 'how I love thy law!' Pſal. cxix. 97.; after thoſe who have God's image in them, John xiii. 35. 'By this ſhall all men know 'that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love

'one to another.' 1 John iii. 14. 'We 'know that we have passed from death 'unto life, because we love the brethren.' This love to God's people is upon a pure account, as they are the children of God, and do keep his statutes, 1 Pet. i. 22. it is 'with a pure heart fervently;' and therefore it goeth towards all such, whom the man knoweth or apprehendeth to be such, Psal. cxix. 63. 'I am a 'companion of all them that fear thee, 'and of them that keep thy precepts,' in all cases and conditions, even where there is nothing to beautify or commend, but the image of God. And this love is so fervent many times, 1 Pet. i. 22. that it putteth itself out in all relations, so as a man seeketh a godly wife, a godly master, a godly servant, a godly counseller, if he have to choose upon, Psal. ci. 6. 'Mine eyes shall be upon 'the faithful of the land, that they may 'dwell with me: he that walketh in a 'perfect way, he shall serve me.' And it is not quenched by many waters, Cant. viii. 7.; many imperfections and infirmities, difference in opinion, wrongs received, will not altogether quench love. Also it is communicative of good according to its measure, and as the case

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of the poor godly requireth, Psal. xvi. 2. 'Thou art my Lord, my goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints,' &c. 1 John iii. 17. 18. 19. 'But whoso 'hath this world's good, and seeth his 'brother have need, and shutteth up 'his bowels of compassion from him, 'how dwelleth the love of God in him? 'My little children, let us not love in 'word, neither in tongue, but in deed 'and in truth. And hereby we know 'that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.' The man's hatred is also renewed, and is now bended against sin, Psal. cxix. 113. 'I hate 'vain thoughts;' against God's enemies, as such, Psal. cxxxix. 21. 22. 'Do not I 'hate them that hate thee?' &c. The joy or delight is renewed, for it runneth towards God, Psal. lxxiii. 25. 'Whom 'have I in heaven but thee? and there 'is none upon earth that I desire besides 'thee;' towards his law and will, Psal. i. 2. 'His delight is in the law of the 'Lord;' and towards the godly and their fellowship, Psal. xvi. 3. 'To the saints, 'in whom is all my delight.' The sorrow is turned against sin which hath wronged Christ, Zech. xii. 10. looking to him whom they have pierced, they

mourn; 2 Cor. vii. 11. the sorrow is godly there, and against what encroacheth upon God's honour: they are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, and the reproach of that is their burden, Zeph. iii. 18. There is some renovation in all the affections, as in every other part of the soul pointing now towards God.

3. The very outward members of the man are renewed, as the scripture speaks, the tongue, the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot, *&c.*; so that those members which once were improved as weapons of unrighteousness unto sin, are now improved as weapons of righteousness unto holiness, Rom. vi. 19.

Secondly, A man who is in Christ, is renewed in some measure in all his ways: 'Behold, all things are become new,' 2 Cor. v. 17. The man becometh new,

1. In the way of his interest. He was upon any good before, though but apparent, and at best but external, Psal. iv. 6. 'Many say, Who will shew 'us any good?' But now his interest and business is, how to be found in Christ in that day, Phil. iii. 9. or, how to be forthcoming to him, and walk before him in the light of the living, Psal. lvi. 13. which he would choose among all

all the mercies that fill this earth, Psal. cxix. 64. 'The earth, O Lord, is full of 'thy mercy; teach me thy statutes.' The interest of Christ also becometh the man's interest, as appeareth in the song of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. and in the song of Mary, Luke i. It is strange to see people newly converted, and having reached but the beginnings of knowledge, concern and interest themselves in the public matters of Christ's kingdom, so desirous to have him riding prosperously, and subduing the people under him.

2. The man that is in Christ, is renewed in the way of his worship. He was wont to serve God in the oldness of the letter, for the fashion, answering the letter of the command in the outside of duty, which one in whom the old man hath absolute dominion can do: but now he worshippeth God in newness of spirit, Rom. vii. 6. in a new way, wherein he is helped by the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 26. beyond the reach of flesh and blood. He serveth now the true and living God, 1 Thess. i. 9. in spirit and in truth, John iv. 24. having spiritual apprehensions of God, and engaged in his very soul in that work, doing and saying truly and not feignedly when he worshippeth;

worshippeth; still desiring to approach unto him as a living God, who heareth and seeth him, and can accept his service, Psal. xlii. 1. 2. I grant, he fails of this many times; yet I may say, such worship he intendeth, and sometimes overtaketh; and doth not much reckon that worship, which is not so performed unto God; and the iniquity of his holy things is not the least part of his burden and exercise. Such a worship natural men are strangers unto, whilst they babble out their vain-glorious boastings, like the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. 12. to an unknown God, Acts xvii. 23.

3. The man that is in Christ, is renewed in the way of his outward calling and employment in the world; he now resolveth to be about it, because God hath commanded so, 'not slothful 'in business, fervent in spirit, serving 'the Lord,' Rom. xii. 11. and to eye God in it as the last end, 'doing it to 'his glory,' 1 Cor. x. 31.; and studieth to keep some intercourse with God in the exercise of his outward employments, as Jacob doth in his latter-will, Gen. xlix. 18. 'I have waited for thy salvation, O 'Lord;' and as Nehemiah did, Neh. ii. 4. 'Then the king said unto me, For 'what

'what dost thou make request? so I 'prayed to the God of heaven.' So as the man resolveth to walk with God, and set him always before him, Psal. xvi. 8.; wherein, I deny not, he faileth often.

4. He becometh new in the way of his relations; he becometh a more dutiful husband, father, brother, master, servant, neighbour, &c.; herein doth he exercise himself to keep a conscience void of offence towards men, as well as towards God, Acts xxiv. 16. becoming all things to all men, 1 Cor. ix. 22.

5. He becometh new in the way of lawful liberties; he studieth to make use of meat, drink, sleep, recreations, apparel, with an eye to God, labouring not to come under the power of any lawful thing, 1 Cor. vi. 12. 'All things are 'lawful unto me, but all things are not 'expedient; all things are lawful for 'me, but I will not be brought under 'the power of any:' nor to give offence to others in the use of these things, Rom. xiv. 20. 21. 'For meat destroy 'not the work of God: all things in-'deed are pure; but it is evil for that 'man who eateth with offence: it is 'good

'good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink 'wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made 'weak.' Rom. xv. 2. 'Let every one of 'us please his neighbour for his good to 'edification;' nor 'using liberty as an 'occasion to the flesh,' Gal. v. 13. Yea, he laboureth to use all these things as a stranger on earth, so as his moderation may appear, Phil. iv. 5. 'Let your mo-'deration be known unto all men.' And some way he doth eye God as the last end in these things, 1 Cor. x. 31. 'doing all to the glory of God:' so as we may say of that man, 'Old things 'are' much 'passed away, all things 'are,' in some measure, 'become new,' 2 Cor. v. 17. He that is so a new creature, is undoubtedly in Christ.

This renovation of a man in all manner of conversation, and this being under law to God in all things, is that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. Men may fancy things to themselves, but unless they study to approve themselves unto God in all well-pleasing, and reach some inward testimony of sincerity that way, they shall not assure their hearts before him. 'The testimony of mens conscience is

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'their rejoicing,' 2 Cor. i. 12. 'By this 'we know that we know him, if we 'keep his commandments,' 1 John ii. 3. 'And hereby we know that we are 'of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our 'hearts before him. For if our heart 'condemn us, God is greater than our 'heart, and knoweth all things. Belo-'ved, if our heart condemn us not, 'then have we confidence towards God,' 1 John iii. 19. 20. 21. No confidence if the heart condemn. This is the new creature, having a principle of new ſpiritual life infuſed by God into the heart, whereby it becometh new, and putteth forth acts of new life throughout the whole man, as we have ſaid, ſo as he pointeth towards the whole law: both towards theſe commands which forbid ſin; ſo he reſolveth to ſet againſt ſecret ſins, 'not to lay a ſtumbling-block be-'fore the blind,' Lev. xix. 14: little ſins, which are judged ſo by many, the leaſt things of the law, Matth. v. 19. 'Whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe 'leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach 'men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in 'the kingdom of heaven:' ſpiritual ſins, filthineſs of the ſpirit, 2 Cor. vii. 1. 'Having therefore theſe promiſes, dear-

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'ly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves 'from all filthiness of the flesh and 'spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear 'of God:' sins of omission as well as of commission, since men are to be judged by these, Matth. xxv. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 'Then shall he say unto 'them on the left hand, Depart from 'me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, 'prepared for the devil and his angels: 'for I was an hungred, and ye gave me 'no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave 'me no drink,' *&c*: yea, sins that are winded in into his natural humour and constitution, and so are as a right eye or hand to him, Matth. v. 29. 'If 'thy right eye offend thee, pluck it 'out, and cast it from thee,' *&c*. This new principle of life, by the good hand of God, maketh the man set against every known sin, so far as not to allow peaceable abode to any known darkness, 2 Cor. vi. 14. 'What fellowship hath 'righteousness with unrighteousness? 'and what communion hath light with 'darkness?' As also he pointeth towards those commands which relate to duty, and the quickening of grace in man: it maketh a man respect all God's known commands, Psal. cxix. 6.

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to live godly, righteouſly, and ſoberly, Tit. ii. 12.; yea, and to ſtudy a right and ſincere way and manner of doing things, reſolving not to give over this ſtudy of conformity to God's will, whilſt he liveth on earth, but ſtill to preſs forward toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus, Phil. iii. 13. 14. This is true holineſs, very becoming all thoſe who pretend to be heirs of that holy habitation, in the immediate company and fellowſhip of a holy God, 1 John iii. 3. 'We know that 'when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like 'him.'

Some may think theſe things high attainments, and very hard to be won at. I grant it is true: But, *firſt*, remember that there is a very large allowance in the covenant, promiſed to his people, which maketh things more eaſy. The Lord hath engaged to take away the ſtony heart, to give a heart of fleſh, a new heart, an heart to fear him for ever; he hath engaged to put his law in mens heart, to put his fear in their heart, to make them keep that law; to put his Spirit in them, to cauſe them keep it. He hath promiſed to ſatisfy the prieſts with fatneſs, that the ſouls of the people

may be ſatiated with his goodneſs, and to keep and water them continually every moment, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Jer. xxxii. 39. 40. Jer. xxxi. 33. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Jer. xxxi. 14. Jer. xxxi. 12. Iſ. xxvii. 3. And if he muſt be inquired to do all theſe things unto men, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. he engageth to pour out the Spirit of grace and ſupplication on them, Ezek. xii. 10. and ſo to learn them how to ſeek theſe things, and how to put him to it, to do all for them.

Secondly, For the ſatisfaction of the weaker, I grant this new creature, as we have circumſcribed and enlarged it, will not be found, in all the degrees of it, in every gracious perſon. But it is well if,

1. There be a new man: we cannot grant leſs; 'If any man be in Chriſt, he 'is a new creature,' 2 Cor. v. 17. And that is the new man, which all muſt put on who are ſavingly taught of Chriſt; Eph. iv. 21. 22. 23. 24. 'If ſo be that 'ye have heard him, and have been 'taught by him, as the truth is in 'Jeſus: that ye put off concerning 'the former converſation, the old man 'which is corrupt according to the de-'ceitful luſts: and be renewed in the 'ſpirit

'ſpirit of your mind; and that ye put 'on the new man, which after God is 'created in righteouſneſs, and true holi-'neſs.' There muſt be ſome renewing after the image of God in a man's ſoul and body; there muſt be ſomewhat of every part of the man pointing towards God; although I grant every one cannot inſtruct this to others, neither diſcern it in himſelf, becauſe many know not the diſtinct parts of the ſoul, nor pieces of reformation competent to every part of the ſoul and body; yet it will be found there is ſome ſuch thing in them, yea, they have a witneſs of it within them, if you make the thing plain and clear to them what it is.

2. There muſt be ſuch a reſpect unto God's known commands, that a man do not allow peaceably any known iniquity to dwell in him; for, 'what fel-'lowſhip hath righteouſneſs with un-'righteouſneſs? and what communion 'hath light with darkneſs?' 2 Cor. vi. 14. 15. 16. He muſt not regard iniquity: Pſal. cxix. 6. 'Then ſhall I not 'be aſhamed, when I have reſpect unto 'all thy commandments.' Pſal. lxvi. 18. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, 'the Lord will not hear me.' I grant

men may be ignorant of many commands and many sins, and may imagine in some cases, that some sins are not hateful unto God; but supposing that they are instructed in these things, there can be no agreement between righteousness and unrighteousness.

3. Men must point towards all the law of God in their honest resolutions; for this is nothing else than to give up the heart unto God, to put his law in it without exception, which is a part of the covenant we are to make with God, Heb. viii. 10. 'This is the covenant that 'I will make with the house of Israel--- 'I will put my laws into their mind, 'and write them in their hearts.' I grant many know not how to point towards God's law in all their ways; but if it be made manifest unto them how that should be done, they will point at it. And it is true, they will many times fail of their resolutions in their practice; yet when they have failed, they can say, They did resolve otherwise, and will yet honestly, and without guile, resolve to do otherwise, and it will prove their affliction to have failed of their resolution, when the Lord discovereth

diſcovereth it to them, which he will do in due time.

4. When we are to judge of our ſtate by the new creature, we muſt do it at a convenient time, when we are in good caſe, at leaſt not when we are in the worſt caſe; for the fleſh and Spirit do luſt and fight againſt other, Gal. v. 17. and ſometimes the one, and ſometimes the other doth prevail. Now I ſay, we muſt chooſe a convenient time, when the ſpiritual part is not by ſome temptation worſted and overpowered by the fleſh: for, in that caſe, the new creature is recoiled back in its ſtreams, and much returned to the fountain and the habits, except in ſome ſmall things not eaſily diſcernible, whereby it maketh oppoſition to the fleſh, according to the foreſaid ſcripture: for, now is it the time of winter in the ſoul, and we may not expect fruit, yea, not leaves, as in ſome other ſeaſon; only here, leſt profane Atheiſts ſhould make advantage of this, we will ſay, That the Spirit doth often prevail over the fleſh in a godly man, and the ſcope, aim, tenor, and main drift of his way is in the law of the Lord, that is, his *walk*, Pſal. cxix. 1.;

whereas the path-way, and ordinary course of the wicked is sin, as is often hinted in the book of the Proverbs of Solomon. And if it happen that a godly man be overmastered by any transgression, ordinarily it is his sad exercise; and we suppose he keeps it still in dependency before God, to have it rectified, as David speaketh, Psal. lvi. 13. 'Wilt thou not deliver my feet from 'falling?'

CHAP. X.

The difference betwixt a truly renewed man who is in Christ, and hypocrites.

Object. ATheists and hypocrites may have great changes and renovation wrought upon them, and in them, and I fear mine be such.

Answ. I grant that Atheists and hypocrites have many things in them, which do look like the new creature.

1. In regard of the parts of the man, they may, (1.) Come to much knowledge, as Heb. vi. 4. 'They are en-'lightened.' (2.) There may be a reel amongst their affections, as, they receive the word with joy, as he that received the seed into stony places, Matth. xiii. 20.

20. (3.) They may reach a great deal of outward reformation in the outward man, both anent freedom from ſin, and engagement to poſitive duty, as that Phariſee did, Luke xviii. 11. 12. 'God, 'I thank thee, that I am not as other 'men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adul-'terers, or even as this publican. I faſt 'twice in the week, I give tithes of all 'that I poſſeſs.' Yea, (4.) In regard of their practical underſtanding, they may judge ſome things of God to be excellent; the officers ſaid, that 'never man 'ſpake as Chriſt,' John vii. 46.

2. Hypocrites may have a great deal of profeſſion. (1.) They may talk of the law and goſpel, and of the covenant, as the wicked do, Pſal. l. 16. 'What haſt thou to do to declare my 'ſtatutes, or that thou ſhouldſt take 'my covenant in thy mouth?' (2.) They may confeſs ſin openly to their own ſhame, as king Saul did, 1 Sam. xxvi. 21. (3.) They may humble themſelves in ſackcloth with Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 27. (4.) They may inquire buſily after duty, and come chearfully to receive it; Iſ. lviii. 2. 'Yet they ſeek me daily, 'and delight to know my ways, as a 'nation that did righteouſneſs, and

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'forsook not the ordinance of their 'God: they ask of me the ordinances of 'justice: they take delight in approach-'ing to God.' (5.) They may join with God's interest in a hard and difficult time, as Demas, and other hypocrites in the book of the Acts of the apostles, who afterwards fell off. (6.) They may give much of their goods to God and the saints, as Ananias, Acts v. 1. 2. if not all their goods, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. 'Though I bestow all my goods to feed 'the poor, and have not charity, it pro-'fiteth me nothing.' Yea, (7.) It is not impossible for some such, being straitly engaged in their credit, to give their bodies to be burnt, as in the last cited place.

3. Hypocrites may advance far in the common and ordinary steps of a Christian work, such as the elect have when God leads them captive. As, (1.) They may be under great convictions of sin, as Judas was, Matth. xxvii. 3. 4. 5. So was king Saul often. (2.) They may tremble at the word of God, and be under much terror, as Felix was, Acts xxiv. 25. (3.) They may rejoice in receiving of the truth, as he that received the seed into stony places, Matth. xiii.

xiii. 20. (4.) They may be in some peace and quiet in expectation of salvation by Christ, as the foolish virgins were, Matth. xxv. (5.) All this may be backed and followed with some good measure of reformation, as the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. 12. The unclean spirit may go out of them, Matth. xii. 43. (6.) This work may seem to be confirmed by some special experiences and tastings of the good word of God, Heb. vi. 4. 5.

4. Hypocrites may have some things very like the saving graces of the Spirit. As, (1.) They may have a sort of faith, with Simon Magus, Acts viii. 13. (2.) They may have a sort of repentance, and may walk mournfully, Mal. iii. 14. 'What profit is it, that we have 'walked mournfully before the Lord 'of hosts?' (3.) They may have a great fear of God, such as Balaam had, who for a house full of gold would not go with the messengers of Balak, without leave asked of God, and given, Numb. xxii. 18. (4.) They have a sort of hope, Job xviii. 13. 'The hypocrites 'hope shall perish.' (5.) They have some love, so had Herod to John, Mark vi. 26. I need not to insist, it is out of all

all question they have counterfeits of all saving graces.

5. They have somewhat like the special communications of God, and the witnessing of his Spirit, as somewhat like 'the powers of the world to come,' powerfully on them, with some flashes of joy arising thence, as Heb. vi. 4. 5. 'For it is impossible for those who were 'once enlightened, and have tasted of 'the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have 'tasted the good word of God, and 'the powers of the world to come; if 'they shall fall away, to renew them 'again unto repentance.' Notwithstanding of all which, they are but almost persuaded with Agrippa to be Christians, Acts xxvi. 28. It were tedious to speak particularly to each of these things, and to clear it up, that they are all but rotten ware; I shall condescend upon some few things, wherein a truly renewed man, who is in Christ, doth differ from hypocrites and reprobates.

1. Whatsoever change be in hypocrites, yet their heart is not changed and made new. The new heart is only given to the elect, when they are converted and brought under the bond of the covenant:

venant: Jer. xxxii. 39. 'I will give them 'one heart, and one way, that they may 'fear me for ever.' Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'A 'new heart will I give you, and a new 'spirit will I put within you, and I will 'take away the stony heart out of your 'flesh, and I will give you an heart of 'flesh.' Hypocrites did never apprehend Christ as the only satisfying good in all the world, for which with joy they would quit all; for then the kingdom of God were entered into them, Matth. xiii. 44. 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto 'treasure hid in a field; the which when 'a man hath found, he hideth, and for 'joy thereof goeth and selleth all that 'he hath, and buyeth that field.' The truly renewed man dare and can upon good ground say, and hath a testimony of it from on high, that his heart hath been changed in taking up of Christ, and hath been led out after him, as the only enriching treasure, in whom to be found he accounteth all things else loss and dung, Phil. iii. 8. 9.

2. Whatsoever reformation or profession hypocrites do attain unto; as it cometh not from a new heart, and pure principle of zeal for God, so it is always for some wicked and by-end, as to be seen

seen of men, Matth. vi. 5. or to evite and shun some outward strait, to be free of God's wrath and the trouble of their own conscience, Is. lviii. 3. 'Wherefore 'have we fasted, say they, and thou 'seest not? wherefore have we afflicted 'our soul, and thou takest no know-'ledge?' Mal. iii. 14. 'What profit is 'it, that we have kept his ordinance, 'and that we have walked mournfully 'before the Lord of hosts?' In testimony of this, they never have respect to all known commands, else they should never be ashamed, Psal. cxix. 6.: nor do they without approven guile in their own heart, resolve against every known iniquity, else they were freed of heart-condemnings, and so might justly have confidence before God, 1 John ii. 21. 22. If in never so mean a case, they did, from a principle of love unto, and of zeal for Christ, and for a right end, confess and profess him, Christ were obliged by his own word to confess them before his Father, Matth. x. 32.

3. Whatsoever length hypocrites advance in that work, by which people are led in unto Christ, yet they never seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, Matth. vi. 33. The one thing

thing that is necessary, *viz.* Christ's friendship and fellowship, is never their one thing and heart-satisfying choice, else that better part would never be taken from them, Luke x. 42.

4. Whatsoever counterfeits of grace are in hypocrites, yet they are all bred there, without any saving work of the Spirit of Christ; and it is enough to exclude them from the benefit of this mark, that they are never denied to these things, nor emptied of them, but still do rest on them as their saviour, so that they submit not unto the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3. And that is enough to keep them at a distance from Christ, who will never clout that old garment of hypocrites with his fine new linen, nor put his new wine in these old bottles, Matth. ix. 16. 17.

5. We may say, let hypocrites, reprobates, or Atheists have what they can, they want the three great essentials of religion and true Christianity. (1.) They are not broken in themselves, and emptied even of their righteousness, the length of self-lothing, yet lying open for relief. Such lost ones Christ came to seek and save, Luke xix. 10. (2.) They never took up Christ Jesus as the only

treasure and jewel that can only enrich, and should satisfy; and therefore have never cordially agreed unto God's device in the covenant, and so are not worthy of him; neither hath the kingdom of God savingly entered into their heart, Matth. xiii. 44. 'The kingdom 'of heaven is like unto treasure hid in 'a field; the which when a man hath 'found, he hideth, and for joy thereof 'selleth all that he hath, and buyeth 'that field.' (3.) They never in earnest do close with Christ's whole yoke without exception, judging all his will, just and good, holy and spiritual, as Rom. vii. 12. And therefore no rest allowed on them by Christ: Matth. xi. 29. 'Take 'my yoke upon you, and ye shall find 'rest unto your souls.' Therefore, whosoever thou art, who can lay clear and just claim to these three foresaid things, thou art beyond the reach of all Atheists, hypocrites, and reprobates in the world, as having answered the great ends and intents of the law and gospel.

Object. I am clear sometimes, I think, to lay claim to that mark of the new creature, yet at other times sin doth so prevail over me, that I am made to question all the work within me.

Answ.

Answ. It is much to be lamented, that people professing his name, should be so slaited and enslaved by transgression, as many are. Yet in an answer to the objection, if it be seriously proponed, we say, The saints are found in scripture justly laying claim unto God and his covenant, when iniquity did prevail over them, as we find, Psal. lxv. 3. 'Iniquities prevail against me; as for our 'transgressions, thou shalt purge them 'away.' Rom. vii. 23. 25. Paul thanks God through Christ, when a law in his members leads him captive unto sin. But for the better understanding, and safe application, of such truths, we must difference between gross outbreakings, and ordinary infirmities or heart-ills, or sins that come unawares upon a man, without forethought or any deliberation. As for the former sort, it is hard for a man, whilst he is under the power of them, to see his gracious change, although it be in him; and very hard to draw any comfort from it, until the man be in some measure recovered, and begin seriously to resent such sins, and to resolve against them. We find David calling himself God's servant, quickly after his numbering of God's people; but

he was then under the ſerious reſentment of his ſin, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. Jonah layeth claim to God as his maſter under his rebellion; but he is then ruing it, and in a ſpirit of revenge againſt himſelf for his ſin, Jonah i. 9. 10. 12. Next, as for theſe ſins of infirmity, and daily incurſion and heart-ills, ſuch as thoſe whereof Paul doth complain, it is like, were;

We ſhall draw out ſome things from that ſeventh chapter to the Romans, whereupon Paul maintains his intereſt in Chriſt, and if you can apply them, it is well. (1.) When Paul findeth that he doth much fail, and cannot reach conformity to God's law, he doth not blame the law, as being too ſtrict, ſo as men cannot keep it, as hypocrites uſe to ſpeak; but he doth blame himſelf as being carnal; and he ſaith of the law, that it is good, holy, and ſpiritual, Rom. vii. 12. 14. (2.) He can ſay, he failed of a good which he intended, and did outſhoot himſelf, and he had often honeſtly reſolved againſt the evil which he fell into, Rom. vii. 15. 18. 19. (3.) He ſaith that the prevailing of ſin over him is his exerciſe, ſo as he judgeth himſelf wretched becauſe of ſuch a *body of death*, from

which

which he longeth to be delivered, Rom. vii. 24. (4.) He ſaith, that whilſt he is under the power and law of ſin, there is ſomewhat in the bottom of his heart oppoſing it, although overmaſtered by it, which would be another way; and when that gets the upper hand, it is a delightſome thing, Rom. vii. 22. 25. Upon theſe things he 'thanks God in 'Chriſt,' that 'there is no condemna-'tion,' Rom. vii. 25. and viii. 1. Now then look if you can lay claim to theſe things. (1.) If you do blame yourſelf, and approve the law, whilſt you fail. (2.) If you can ſay, that you do often reſolve againſt ſin honeſtly, and without known guile; and do ſo reſolve the contrary good before the evil break in upon you. (3.) If you can ſay, that you are ſo far exerciſed with your failings, as to judge yourſelf wretched becauſe of ſuch things, and a body of death which is the root and fountain of ſuch things. (4.) If you can ſay, that there is a party within you oppoſing theſe evils, which would be at the right way, and, as it were, is in its element when it is in God's way, it is well. Only be adviſed not to take reſt until in ſome good meaſure you be rid of the ground of this objection; or at

least, until you can very clearly say, You are waging war with these things. Now, a good help against the prevailing power of sin, is, to cleave close to Christ Jesus by faith, which as it is a desirable part of sanctification, and a notable piece of conformity to God's will, and most subservient unto his design in the gospel, Gal. ii. 20. 21. 'The life which I now live in 'the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son 'of God, who loved me, and gave him-'self for me. I do not frustrate the 'grace of God:' and so should be much endeavoured by people, as a work pleasing unto God, John vi. 29. 'This is 'the work of God, that ye believe on 'him whom he hath sent:' so it is the ready way to draw life and sap from Christ the blessed root, for fruitfulness in all cases, as John xv. 4. 5. 'Abide in 'me, and I in you. As the branch can-'not bear fruit of itself, except it abide 'in the vine; no more can ye, except ye 'abide in me. I am the vine, ye are 'the branches: He that abideth in me, 'and I in him, the same bringeth forth 'much fruit: for without me ye can do 'nothing.'

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the special communications of God, and the singular gracious operations of his Spirit.

Object. I Do not partake of these special communications of God, mentioned in the scripture, and actings and outgoings of his Spirit, whereof gracious people often are speaking, and whereunto they attain; the want of these things maketh me much suspect my state.

Answ. I shall shortly hint some of these excellent communications, and I hope, upon a right discovery of them, there will be but small ground found for the jealous complaints of many gracious people.

First, (Beside these convictions of the Spirit of God, which use to usher Christ's way unto the souls of men, and these also which afterwards do ordinarily attend them), There is a *seal* of the Spirit of God spoken of in scripture, the principal thing whereof is the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, imprinting the draughts and lineaments of God's image and revealed will upon a man, as a seal

or

or signet doth leave an impression and stamp of its likeness upon the thing sealed. So it is, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having 'this seal, The Lord knoweth them that 'are his. And, Let every one that 'nameth the name of Christ, depart from 'iniquity.' And thus I conceive the seal to be called a witness, 1 John v. 10. 'He 'that believeth hath the witness in himself;' that is, the grounds upon which an interest in Christ is to be made out and proved, are in every believer; for he hath somewhat of the sanctifying work of God's Spirit in him, which is a sure, although not always a clear and manifest witness.

Secondly, There is *communion* with God, much talked of among Christians, whereby they understand the sensible presence of God refreshing the soul exceedingly. But if we speak properly, communion with God is a mutual interest between God and a man, who hath closed with him in Christ. It is a commonness, or a common interest between God and a man; not only is a man interested in God himself, but in all that is the Lord's; so the Lord hath a special interest in the man, and also all that belongs to him.

There

There is a communion between huſband and wife, whereby they have a ſpecial intereſt in others perſons, goods, gear, and concernments; ſo is it here: there is ſuch a communion with God, he is our God, and all things are ours, becauſe he is ours. This communion with God all true believers have at all times, as we ſhall ſhew afterwards. I grant there is an actual improvement of that communion, whereby men do boldly meddle with any thing that belongs unto God, and do meddle with himſelf, as their own, with much homelineſs and familiarity, eſpecially in worſhip, when the ſoul doth converſe with a living God, partaking of the divine nature, growing like unto him, and ſweetly travelling through his attributes, and with ſome confidence of intereſt, viewing theſe things as the man's own goods and gear: this we call communion with God in ordinances. This indeed is not ſo ordinarily nor frequently made out to men, and all his people do not equally partake of it; and it is true, that what is in God, goeth not out for the behoof of the man to his apprehenſion equally at all times, yet certainly communion with God, properly ſo called, *viz.* that commonneſs

monneſs of intereſt between God and a man who is ſavingly in covenant with him, doth always ſtand firm and ſure; and ſo much of communion with God in ordinances have all believers, as that their heart converſeth with a living God there, now and then, and is in ſome meaſure changed into that ſame image; and there needeth be no doubt about any further in it.

Thirdly, There is a thing which is called *fellowſhip* with God, often miſtaken alſo amongſt believers. If by fellowſhip be meant the walking in our duty as in the ſight of a living God, who ſeeth and heareth us, and is witneſs to all our carriage, it is a thing common unto all gracious men; they all have it habitually, and in deſign, Pſal. xvi. 8. 'I have ſet the Lord always before me.' Yea, and often they have it actually in exerciſe, when their ſpirit is in any good frame; they walk as if they ſaw God ſtanding by them, and have ſome thoughts of his favour through Chriſt: 'Truly our 'fellowſhip is with the Father, and with 'his Son Jeſus Chriſt,' 1 John i. 3. If we by fellowſhip do mean a ſweet, refreſhing, familiar, ſenſible converſing with God, which doth delight and refreſh

freſh the ſoul, beſide what the conſcience of duty doth; it is then a walking in the light of his countenance, and a good part of ſenſible preſence: and although it ſeemeth Enoch had much of it, whilſt it is ſaid, 'He walked with 'God,' Gen. v. 24.; yet it is not ſo ordinary as the former, nor ſo common to all Chriſtians; for here the ſoul is filled as with marrow and fatneſs, following hard after its guide, and ſingularly upheld by his right hand, Pſal. lxiii. 5. 8. 'My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with mar'row and fatneſs; and my mouth ſhall 'praiſe thee with joyful lips. My ſoul 'followeth hard after thee; thy right 'hand upholdeth me.'

Fourthly, There is a thing which is called *acceſs* unto God; and this I take to be the removing of obſtructions out of the way between a man and God, ſo as the man is admitted to come near. We are ſaid to have acceſs to a great perſon, when doors are caſt open, guards removed from about him, and we admitted to come cloſe at him; ſo it is here. Now, this acceſs, in ſcripture, is ſometimes taken for Chriſt's preparing of the way, the removing of enmity between God and ſinners, ſo as men now have a patent way

way to come unto God through Christ; Eph. ii. 18. 'For through him we both 'have an access by one Spirit unto the 'Father.' Sometimes it is taken for the actual improvement of that access purchased by Christ, when a man finds all obstructions and differences, which do ordinarily fall in between him and God, removed: God is not uncouth to him, nor as a stranger, keeping up himself from him, or frowning on him, but the man is admitted to come even to his *seat*, as Job xxiii. 3. Of the want of this doth Job complain, chap. xxiii. 8. 9. whilst he saith, 'I go for-'ward, backward, to the right and left 'hand, and I find him not.' The first sort of access is common to all believers; they are brought near by the blood of the covenant, and are no more far off, as the deadly enmity between God and them is removed. But access in the other sense is dispensed more according to the Lord's absolute sovereignty and pleasure, and it is left in the power of believers to obstruct it unto themselves, until it please the Lord mercifully and freely to grant it unto them again; so it is up and down, and there needs be no question as to a man's state about it.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, There is a thing called *liberty* before God; and this properly is freedom, or free speaking unto God. Many do much question their state, because of the want of this now and then, since the scripture hath said, 'Where the Spirit 'is, there is liberty,' 2 Cor. iii. 17. But they do unjustly confine that liberty spoken of there, unto this free speaking before God. I grant where the Spirit of the Lord doth savingly discover God's will in the scriptures to a man, there is liberty from any obligation to the ceremonial law, and from the condemning power of the moral law, and from much of that gross darkness and ignorance which is on natural hearts as a vail hiding Christ in the gospel from them. I grant also, that sometimes, even this liberty which is a free communing with God, and ordering of our cause before him, and filling of our mouth with arguments, Job xxiii. 4. is granted to the godly, but not as liberty taken in the former senses. Although the Lord hath obliged himself to pour out the Spirit of prayer upon all the house of David in some measure, Zech. xii. 10.; yet this communication of the Spirit, which we

call liberty, or free speaking unto God, dependeth much on the Lord's absolute pleasure, when, and in what measure, to allow it. This liberty, which we call freedom or free speaking with God in prayer, is sometimes much abstracted from any great confidence in the time of prayer, at least, until it draw towards the close of it; it standeth much in a vivacity of the understanding to take up the case which a man is to speak before God, so as he can order his cause: and next, there be words, or verbal expressions, elegant, suitable, and very emphatical, or powerful and pithy. There is also joined a fervency of spirit in prayer, whereof the scripture speaketh; the soul is hot and bended, and very intent. There is also ordinarily in this liberty, a special melting of the heart often joined with a great measure of the Spirit of grace and supplication, Zech. xii. 10. So the soul is poured out before God as for a *first-born*. Such is the liberty which many saints get before God, whilst in much brokenness of heart and fervency of spirit they are admitted to speak their mind fully to God, as a living God, noticing (at least) their prayer. Sometimes this liberty is joined with confidence, and

and then it is not only a free, but also a bold speaking before God. It is that *boldness with confidence*, Eph. iii. 12. 'In 'whom we have boldness and access with 'confidence by the faith of him.' This is more rarely imparted unto men than the former, yet it is ordinary: it hath in it, beside what we spake before, some influence of the Spirit upon faith, making it put out some vigorous acting in prayer. There is a sweet mournful frame of spirit, by which a man poureth out his heart in God's bosom, and with some confidence of his favour and good will, pleadeth his cause before him as a living God; and this is all the sensible presence that many saints do attain unto. There is no ground of doubt anent a man's state, in the point of liberty before God, in this last sense, because there is nothing essential to the making up of a gracious state here: some have it, some want it; some have it at some times, and not at other times, so that it is much up and down; yet I may say, gracious men may do much, by a very ordinary influence, contributing towards the attaining and retaining, or keeping of such a frame of spirit.

Sixthly, There is a thing called *influ-*

ence or *breathing of the Spirit.* This gracious influence, for of such only do I now speak, is either ordinary, and this is the operations of the Holy Spirit on the soul, and the habits of grace there, whereby they are still kept alive, and in some exercise and acting, although not very discernible. This influence, I conceive, doth always attend believers, and is that *keeping* and *watering night and day*, and *every moment*, promised, Is. xxvii. 3. Or, this influence is more singular and special, and is that same to a gracious, although a withered soul, as the *wind* and *breath* to the *dry bones*, putting them in good case, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. 10.; and as the *dew* or *rain* to the *grass*, or newly mown field and parched ground, Psal. lxxii. 6. Such influence is meant, Cant. iv. 16. by the blowing of the south-wind, making the spices to flow out. When the Spirit moveth thus, there is an edge put upon the graces of God in the soul, and they are made to act more vigorously. This is the *enlarging of the heart*, by which a man doth *run in the ways of God*, Psal. cxix. 32. This influence is more discernible than the former, and not so ordinarily communicated. Also here, sometimes the wind bloweth

bloweth more upon one grace, and ſometimes more diſcernibly upon another, and often upon many of the graces together; and according to the leſſer or greater meaſure of this influence, the ſoul acteth more or leſs vigorouſly towards God: and ſince faith is a created grace in the ſoul, this influence of the Spirit is upon it, ſometimes leſs, ſometimes more, and accordingly is the aſſurance of faith ſmall or great.

Seventhly, There is the *hearing of prayer*, often ſpoken of in ſcripture; and many vex themſelves about it, alledging that they know nothing of it experimentally. I grant there is a favourable hearing of prayer; but we muſt remember it is twofold. Either, (1.) It is ſuch as a man is ſimply to believe by way of argument on ſcriptural grounds; as, if I be fled unto Chriſt, and do approach unto God in him, pray according to his will, not regarding iniquity in my heart, exerciſing faith about the thing I pray for, abſolutely or conditionally, according to the nature of the thing and promiſes anent it; I am obliged to believe that God heareth my prayer, and will give what is good, according to theſe ſcriptures, John xiv.

13. 14. 'Whatsoever ye ask in my 'name, I will do it.' 1 John v. 14. 'This is our confidence, that whatso-'ever we ask according to his will, he 'heareth us.' Mark xi. 24. 'Believe 'that ye receive, and ye shall have 'what ye desire.' Psal. lxvi. 18. 'If I 'regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord 'will not hear:' then, if I regard not iniquity, I may believe that he doth hear me. Or, (2.) A man doth sensibly perceive that God heareth his prayer; it is made out to his heart, without any syllogistical deduction. Such a hearing of prayer got Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 18. 'Her countenance was no more 'sad.' Surely the Lord did breathe upon her faith, and made her believe that she was heard: she could not make it out by any argument; for she had not grounds whereupon to build the premisses of the argument, according to scripture, in that particular: God did stamp it some way upon her heart sensibly, and so made her believe it. This is but rarely granted, especially in cases clearly deducible in scripture; therefore people are much to be satisfied in exercising their faith about the other, and ought to leave it to God to

give

give of this latter what he pleaseth. A man's gracious state should not be brought upon debate, upon the account of such hearing of prayer.

Eighthly, There is *assurance* of God's favour by the witnessing of our own spirits; which assurance is deduced by way of argument syllogistically, thus: Whosoever believeth on Christ shall never perish: but I do believe on Christ; therefore I shall never perish. Whoso hath respect unto all God's commandments, shall never be ashamed: but I have respect unto all his commands; therefore I shall never be ashamed. I say, by reasoning thus, and comparing spiritual things with spiritual things, a man may attain unto a good certainty of his gracious state. It is supposed, 1 John iii. 18. 19. that by loving the brethren in deed and in truth, we may assure our hearts before God; and that a man may rejoice upon the testimony of a good conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12.; a man may have confidence towards God, if his heart do not condemn him, 1 John iii. 21. We may then attain unto some assurance, although not full assurance, by the witness of our own spirits. I do not deny, that in this witnessing of our spirits towards assurance,

rance, there is some concurrence of the Spirit of God: but I conceive, there needeth but a very ordinary influence, without which we can do nothing. Now, this assurance, such as it is, may be reached by intelligent believers, who keep a good conscience in their walk. So I hope, there needs be no debate about it, as to a man's gracious state; for if a man will clear himself of heart-condemnings, he will speedily reach this assurance.

Ninthly, There is a *witnessing* of *God's Spirit*, mentioned, Rom. viii. 16. 'bear-'ing witness with our spirit, that we 'are the children of God.' This operation of the Spirit is best understood, if we produce any syllogism by which our spirit doth witness our sonship; as for example, Whosoever loveth the brethren, is passed from death to life, and consequently is in Christ: but I love the brethren; therefore I am passed from death to life. Here there is a threefold operation of the Spirit, or three operations rather: the first is a beam of divine light upon the first proposition, persuading the divine authority of it, as the word of God. The Spirit of the Lord must witness the divinity of the scripture, and that it is the infallible word

of

of God, far beyond all other arguments that can be used for it. The second operation is a glorious beam of light from the Spirit, shining upon the second proposition, and so upon his own graces in the soul, discovering them to be true graces, and such as the scripture calleth so. Thus we are said to 'know by his 'Spirit the things that are freely given 'unto us of God,' 1 Cor. ii. 13. The third operation is in order to the third proposition of the argument, or the conclusion; and this I conceive to be nothing else but an influence upon faith, strengthening it to draw a conclusion of full assurance upon the foresaid premisses.

Now, (with submission unto others, who have greater light in the scripture, and more experience of these precious communications), I do conceive the witness of the Spirit, or witnessing of it, which is mentioned, Rom. viii. 16. 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with 'our spirit, that we are the children of 'God,' is not that first operation upon the first proposition; for that operation is that testimony of the Spirit, by which he beareth witness to the divinity of the whole scripture, and asserteth the divine authority of it unto the souls of gracious men:

men: and ſuch an operation may be upon a truth of ſcripture, which doth not relate to a man's ſonſhip or intereſt in Chriſt at all. The Spirit may ſo ſhine upon any truth, relating to duty, or any other fundamental truth perſuading the divinity of it, upon and unto the ſoul, and ſpeak nothing relating to a man's intereſt in Chriſt. Neither is the third operation of the Spirit, by which he makes faith boldly draw the concluſion, this witneſſing of the Spirit; for that operation is nothing elſe but an influence upon faith, bringing it out to full aſſurance: but that whereupon this full aſſurance is drawn or put out, is ſomewhat deponed and witneſſed already. Therefore I conceive the ſecond operation of the Spirit upon the ſecond propoſition, and ſo upon the graces in the man, is that witneſs of God's Spirit, that beam of divine light ſhining upon thoſe graces, whereby they are made very conſpicuous to the underſtanding: that is the witneſs, the ſhining ſo on them is his witneſſing; for only here in this propoſition, and in this operation, doth the Spirit of God prove a co-witneſs with our ſpirit: for the main thing wherein the witneſs of our ſpirit lieth, is in the

ſecond

second proposition, and so the Spirit of God, witnessing with our spirits, is also in that same proposition. So these two witnesses having deponed and witnessed one and the same thing, *viz.* the truth and reality of such and such graces in the man, which our own spirit or conscience doth depone, according to its knowledge, and the Spirit of the Lord doth certainly affirm and witness to be so; there is a sentence drawn forth, and a conclusion of the man's sonship by the man's faith, breathed upon by the Spirit for that effect: and this conclusion beareth the full assurance of a man's sonship. It may be presumed, that some true saints do not partake of this all their days, as Heb. ii. 15. 'And deliver them, 'who through fear of death were all 'their lifetime subject to bondage.'

Tenthly, I speak with the experience of many saints, and I hope according to scripture, if I say there is a communication of the Spirit of God which is let out to some of his people sometimes, that is somewhat beside, if not beyond that witnessing of a sonship spoken of before. It is a glorious divine manifestation of God unto the soul, shedding abroad God's love in the heart. It is a thing

better

better felt than spoken of. It is no audible voice, but it is a waff of glory filling the soul with God, as he is life, light, love, and liberty, countervailing that audible voice, 'O man, greatly be-'loved,' Dan. x. 19. putting a man in a transport with this on his heart, 'It 'is good to be here,' as Matth. xvii. 4. It is that which went out from Christ to Mary, when he but mentioned her name, John xx. 16. 'Jesus saith unto 'her, Mary. She turned herself, and 'saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to 'say, Master.' He had spoken some words to her before, and she understood not that it was he; but when he uttereth this one word, *Mary*, there was some admirable divine conveyance and manifestation made out unto her heart, by which she was so satisfyingly filled, that there was no place for arguing and disputing whether or no that was Christ, and if she had any interest in him. That manifestation made faith to itself, and did purchase credit and trust to itself, and was equivalent with 'Thus saith 'the Lord.' This is such a glance of glory, that it may in the highest sense be called, *The earnest*, or first-fruits, *of the inheritance*, Eph. i. 14. for it is a felt

armful

armful of the holy God, almoſt wholly conforming the man unto his likeneſs, ſo ſwallowing him up, that he forgetteth all things except the preſent manifeſtation. O how glorious is this manifeſtation of the Spirit! Faith here riſeth to ſo full an aſſurance, that it reſolveth wholly into ſenſible embracements of God. This is the thing which doth beſt deſerve the title of *ſenſible preſence*, and, it is like, is not given unto all believers, ſome whereof are all their days under bondage, and in fear, Heb. ii. 15. But here *love*, almoſt *perfect*, *caſteth out fear*, 1 John iv. 18. This is ſo abſolutely let out upon the Maſter's pleaſure, and ſo tranſient and paſſing, or quickly gone when it is, that no man may bring his gracious ſtate upon debate for want of it.

Eleventhly, There is a thing we call *peace*, about which many do vex themſelves. This peace is either anent a man's ſtate, that he is reconciled unto God by Jeſus Chriſt; or it is anent his preſent caſe and condition, that he is walking ſo as approven of God, at leaſt, ſo far as there is no quarrel or controverſy between God and him threatening a ſtroke. Both of theſe are either ſuch

in the court of ſcripture, and conſequently in God's account; or in the court of a man's own conſcience. Peace anent a man's ſtate, as being in Chriſt, is ſure in the court of ſcripture and of heaven, when a man doth by faith cloſe with Chriſt and the new covenant, Rom. v. 1. 'Being juſtified by faith, we have 'peace with God.' It being ſure and ſolid in the court of ſcripture, it ſhould hold ſure in the court of a man's conſcience, it being rightly informed; for in that caſe it ſtill ſpeaks according to ſcripture. But becauſe often the conſcience is miſinformed, and in the dark; therefore there is often peace anent a man's ſtate acording to ſcripture, whilſt his conſcience doth threaten the contrary, and doth ſtill condemn, and refuſeth to aſſoil the man, as being reconciled unto God through Chriſt. In this caſe, the conſcience muſt be informed, and the man's gracious ſtate made out by the marks of grace, as we ſhewed before: and here the witneſs of my own ſpirit will do much to allay the cry of the conſcience; and if the Spirit of the Lord join his witneſs and teſtimony, the conſcience is perfectly ſatisfied, and proclaimeth peace to the man.

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The other peace, anent a man's preſent caſe or condition, *viz.* that it is approven of God in a goſpel-ſenſe, it may be wanting, and juſtly wanting, although the peace anent a man's ſtate be ſure. This peace anent a man's caſe and condition, is either ſuch in the court of ſcripture, and this is when a man is not regarding iniquity, and reſpecting the commands of God without exception; then the ſcripture ſaith, He ſtands in an even place, and he needeth fear no ſtated quarrel between God and him, in order to a temporary ſtroke: and when it is thus, his conſcience ſhould alſo aſſoil him that ſame way, and would do ſo, if it were rightly informed; but becauſe the conſcience is often in the dark, therefore a man may be alarmed with evil in the court of conſcience, as if he were juſtly to expect a ſtroke from God becauſe of his ſin, and ſome quarrel God hath at him, although he intend ſalvation for him. This is enough to keep a man in diſquiet, and to inhibit him the rejoicing allowed unto him, whilſt he is walking in his integrity: therefore a man muſt here alſo inform his conſcience, and receive no accuſations nor condemn-

ings from it, unleſs it make them clear by ſcripture. At that bar let every man ſtand, both anent his ſtate, and his condition or caſe; and let him appeal from all other courts to that, and not receive any indictment but conform to the truth of God, by which the conſcience is to proceed in all things. And if this were well looked unto, there would not be ſo many groundleſs ſuſpicions amongſt the Lord's people, either anent their ſtate, or their condition, upon every thought which entereth their mind.

Twelfthly, There is the *joy* of the Holy Ghoſt; and this is when the Spirit doth breathe upon our rejoicing in God, (which is a grace very little in exerciſe with many), and maketh it ſet out ſenſibly and vigorouſly; and he exciteth and ſtirreth the paſſion of joy and of delight in the ſoul, ſo as there is an unſpeakable and glorious joy in the ſoul, in the apprehenſion of God's friendſhip and nearneſs unto him, 1 Pet. i. 8. 'In whom 'though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable, 'and full of glory.' This joy followeth upon peace, and peace followeth righteouſneſs, Rom. xiv. 17. 'The kingdom of

'God

'God---is righteouſneſs, and peace, and 'joy in the Holy Ghoſt.' This joy readily will not fail to be according to the meaſure of the aſſurance of faith, as 1 Pet. i. 8. 'In whom believing, ye re-'joice:' ſo that the removal of miſtakes about other things will allay doubts anent this.

Now, becauſe ſome of theſe excellent communications of the Spirit, after they are gone, are brought in queſtion as deluſions of Satan; for vindication of them, we ſay, that the ſpecial operations of God's Spirit in any high degree, uſually are communicated to people after ſuch brokenneſs of ſpirit, Pſal. li. 8. 'Make 'me to hear joy and gladneſs; that the 'bones which thou haſt broken, may re-'joice.' After ſo ſingular pains in religious duty, Dan. ix. 3. 21. 'And I 'ſet my face unto the Lord God to 'ſeek by prayer and ſupplications, with 'faſting, and ſackcloth, and aſhes. And 'whiles I was ſpeaking, and praying, 'and confeſſing my ſin,---the man Ga-'briel, whom I had ſeen in the viſion at 'the beginning, being cauſed to fly 'ſwiftly, touched me.' Or in time of ſuch ſuffering for righteouſneſs, 1 Pet. iv. 13. 14. 'Rejoice, in as much as ye

'are partakers of Christ's sufferings;
'that when his glory shall be revealed,
'ye may be glad also with exceeding
'joy. If ye be reproached for the name
'of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit
'of glory, and of God resteth upon you.'
Or if they break in as the rain that waiteth not for man, then they do so humble and abase the person, Is. vi. 5. 'Wo
'is me, for I am undone, because I am
'a man of unclean lips;----for mine eyes
'have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.'
And there are found so many evidences of grace in the man, Rom. viii. 16.
'The Spirit itself beareth witness with
'our spirit, that we are the children of
'God.' Or these things do so provoke unto holiness, and to have every thing answerable and conform unto these manifestations of God, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'Let
'every one that nameth the name of
'Christ, depart from iniquity.' The person under them doth so lothe all things beside God's friendship and fellowship, Matth. xvii. 4. 'Peter said un-
'to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be
'here.' And these things do carry on them and with them so much authority and divine superscription, whilst they are in the soul, that afterwards they may

may appear ſufficiently to be ſpecial communications of God, and ſingular gracious operations of his Spirit, and no deluſions of Satan transforming himſelf into an angel of light, 2 Cor. xi. 14.; nor ſuch common flaſhes of the Spirit as may admit afterwards irrecoverable apoſtaſy from God, Heb. vi. 4. 5. 6. 'For it is impoſſible for thoſe who were 'once enlightened, and have taſted of 'the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have 'taſted the good word of God, and the 'powers of the world to come; if they 'ſhall fall away, to renew them again 'unto repentance.'

Now then, to conclude this part of the work that relateth unto trial; I ſay to all theſe who complain of the want of the precious outlettings of the Spirit, (1.) Bleſs God if you want nothing eſſential for making out of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt. God hath given unto you Chriſt Jeſus, the greateſt gift he had; and ſince your heart is ſhapen out for him, he will with him give you all things that are good for you in their ſeaſon. (2.) I do believe, upon a right ſearch and trial, after you have underſtood the communications of the Spirit,

you

you are not ſo great a ſtranger to many things as you did ſuſpect yourſelf to be. But, (3.) Remember the promiſes of life, and of peace with God, are no where in ſcripture made unto theſe ſpecial things whereof you alledge the want: the promiſes are made unto faith, followed with holineſs; and it may be preſumed, that many heirs of glory do not in this life partake of ſome of theſe things, but are in bondage all their days through fear of death, Heb. ii. 15. So that there ſhould be no miſtake about theſe things; we may ſeek after them, but God is free to give or with-hold them. (4.) Many do ſeek after ſuch manifeſtations before they give credit by faith unto God's word. He hath borne record that there is life enough for men in Chriſt Jeſus; and if men would by believing ſet to their ſeal that God is true, they ſhould partake of more of theſe excellent things. (5.) I may ſay, many have not honourable apprehenſions and thoughts of the Spirit of God, whoſe proper work it is to put out the foreſaid noble operations. They do not adore him as God, but vex, grieve, quench, and reſiſt him; and many people complaining of the want of theſe things,

things, are not at the pains to ſeek the Spirit in his outgoings, and few do ſet themſelves apart for ſuch precious receipts: therefore be at more pains in religion, give more credit to his word, and eſteem more highly of the Spirit of God, and ſo you may find more of theſe excellent things.

PART

PART II.

How to attain unto a Saving Intereſt in CHRIST.

HAVING, in the former part of this treatiſe, put every man's ſtate to trial, it now remains, that in this following part, we give advice to thoſe, who neither can, nor dare lay claim to the marks formerly mentioned.

QUEST. II. *What ſhall they do who want the marks of a true and ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, already ſpoken of, and neither can, nor dare pretend unto them?*

ANSW. If men miſs in themſelves the marks of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, ſpoken of before, then it is their duty, and of all that hear this goſpel, 'perſonally and 'heartily to cloſe with God's device of 'ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus,' and this ſhall ſecure their ſtate.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Some things premised for the information of those who are more ignorant.

FOR the better understanding of this, we shall premise some things for information of those who are more ignorant, and then speak more directly to the thing. As for the things to be premised:

1. The Lord did at the beginning, out of his bounty, make a covenant with man in Adam, Gen. ii. 16. 17.; and did enable man to abide in that covenant, Eccl. vii. 29. 'God hath 'made man upright:' but man, by eating of that forbidden fruit, Gen. iii. did break that covenant, Hos. vi. 7. 'They like Adam have transgressed the 'covenant,' and made it void for ever, Rom. iii. 20. 'By the deeds of the 'law, there shall no flesh be justified 'in his sight;' and involved himself into all misery thereby, Rom. v. 12. 'As by one man sin entered into the 'world, and death by sin; and so death 'passed upon all men, for that all have 'sinned.'

2. The Lord did most freely, from everlasting,

everlasting, purpose and intend to save men another way, *viz.* by Christ Jesus, and the covenant of grace; in which he intended reconcilement with the elect through Christ Jesus, God and man, born of a woman in due time, to make this agreement effectual. And this device of satisfying his own justice, and saving of the elect by Christ, he did at first intimate to our parents in paradise, Gen. iii. 15. where he saith, that 'the seed of the woman shall 'bruise the serpent's head.' And the Lord hath in all generations made this known to his church.

3. The Lord hath in all ages covenanted to be the reconciled God of all these, who, by their subjection to his ordinances, did profess their satisfaction with this device, and oblige themselves to acquiesce in the same, and to seek salvation by Christ Jesus, as God doth offer him in the gospel: so all the people of Israel are called the Lord's people, and are said to 'avouch 'him to be their God,' and he doth 'avouch them to be his people,' Exod. xix. 5. 8. Deut. xxvi. 17. 18. Yea, the Lord doth also engage himself to be the God of the seed and children of those

thoſe who do ſo ſubject to his ordinances. The covenant is ſaid to be 'made between God and all the people, 'young and old, preſent and not pre-'ſent that day,' Deut. xxix. 10. 11.---15. And all are appointed to come under ſome ſeal of that covenant, as was enjoined to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 10. Not only was it ſo in the Old Teſtament, but it is ſo in the New Teſtament alſo: the Lord makes offer of himſelf to be our God in Chriſt Jeſus; and the people profeſſing their ſatisfaction in that offer, and in teſtimony thereof ſubjecting themſelves unto the ordinances, they are reckoned a covenanted people, and are joined unto his church in thouſands, receiving a ſeal of the covenant, without any further particular previous trial, Acts ii. 38.---41. 'Then Peter ſaid unto 'them, Repent, and be baptized every 'one of you, in the name of Jeſus 'Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins.---- 'Then they that gladly received the 'word, were baptized: and the ſame 'day there were added unto them a-'bout three thouſand ſouls.'

4. Many do deal treacherouſly with God in this covenant, Pſal. lxxviii. 36.

37. 'Nevertheleſs, they did flatter him 'with their mouth, and they lied unto 'him with their tongues: for their heart 'was not right with him, neither were 'they ſtedfaſt in his covenant.' And although they profeſs their eſtimation of Chriſt the Saviour, and their heart-ſatisfaction with that device of ſaving ſinners by him, and having the image of God reſtored by him in them; yet their heart is not right with God, and they do content themſelves with an empty title, of being in a ſealed covenant with God, John viii. 39. 'Abra-'ham is our father,' ſay they. For although the Lord obligeth every man, who profeſſeth his ſatisfaction with Chriſt Jeſus the deviſed ranſom, to be cordial and ſincere herein; and only to theſe who are ſo, doth he make out the ſpiritual promiſes of the covenant, they only being privileged to be the ſons of God, who do really receive Chriſt, John i. 12.; yet the Lord doth permit many to profeſs their cloſing with him in Chriſt, both in the Old and New Teſtament, whilſt their heart is not engaged; and he doth admit them to be members of his church, granting unto them the uſe of ordinances, and

many

many other external mercies and privileges denied unto the Heathen, who are not in covenant with him.

5. Although the great part of people do fooliſhly fancy, that they have cloſed with God in Chriſt Jeſus ſincerely and heartily, or at leaſt, they do, without any ground or warrant, promiſe a new heart to themſelves before they depart this life; yet there be but very few who do really and cordially cloſe with God in Chriſt Jeſus as he is offered in the goſpel; and ſo there be but very few ſaved, as is clear, Matth. vii. 14. 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the 'way which leadeth unto life, and few 'there be who find it.' Matth. xx. 16. 'Many are called, but few are 'choſen.' If people would believe this, it might help to alarm them.

6. Although none at all do cordially cloſe with God in Chriſt Jeſus, and acquieſce in that ranſom found out by God, except only ſuch as are elected, Rom. xi. 7. 'But the election 'hath obtained it, and the reſt were 'blinded,' and whoſe hearts the Lord doth ſovereignly determine to that bleſſed choice, John vi. 44. 'No man 'can come to me, except the Father

'which hath sent me, draw him;' yet the Lord hath left it as a duty upon people who hear this gospel, to close with his offer of salvation through Christ Jesus, as if it were in their power to do it: and the Lord, through these commands and exhortations, wherein he obligeth men to the thing, doth convey life and strength to the elect, and doth therein convey the new heart unto them, which pointeth kindly towards this new device of saving sinners, and towards Christ in his covenant-relations; or, it is the Lord's mind in these commands and invitations, to put people on some duty, with which he useth to concur for accomplishing that business between him and them: so then, it is a *coming* on our part, and yet a *drawing* on his part, John vi. 44.; it is a *drawing* on his part, and a *running* on our part, Cant. i. 4.; it is an *approaching* on our part, and yet a *choosing and causing to approach* on his part, Psal. lxv. 4.; it is a *believing*, or *receiving* on our part, John i. 12. and yet *it is given us to believe*, Phil. i. 29.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

What it is to cloſe with God's device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, and that it is a neceſſary duty.

HAving premiſed theſe things, I ſay, if men miſs in themſelves the marks of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, ſpoken of in the former part of the treatiſe; then, for ſecuring their ſtate, they are obliged with all diligence perſonally and heartily to accept of, and cloſe with God's device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, held out in the goſpel.

In handling of this, we ſhall, I. Shew what it is to accept of, and cloſe with that noble invention. II. We ſhall ſhew that it is the neceſſary duty of thoſe who would be in favour with God, and ſecure their ſouls. III. What is previouſly required of thoſe who perform this duty. IV. What are the qualifications and properties of this duty, if rightly managed. V. What be the native conſequences of it, if it be performed aright.

I. As for the *firſt*, What it is to cloſe with God's device of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt Jeſus, held out in the goſpel:

here we must remember, as we shewed before, that at first God willed man to abide in his favour, by holding fast his first integrity in which he was created; but man by his transgression lost God's favour, made void that covenant of works, and put himself in an utter incapacity to regain the Lord's friendship which he had lost by his sin, and to rescue himself from the curse and wrath now due to him for the same, or any way to procure his own salvation: But the Lord freely hath manifested another way of repairing man's lost estate, *viz.* by sending his Son Christ Jesus in the flesh, to satisfy his justice for the sins of the elect, and to restore in them his image now defaced, and to bring them unto glory; and he hath made open proclamation in the church, that whoever will lay aside all thoughts of saving themselves by the covenant of works, or inherent righteousness, and will agree heartily to be saved by Christ Jesus, they shall be restored to a better condition than formerly man was in, and shall be saved. So then, to close with God's device of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, is, to quit and forego all thoughts of help or salvation by our own righteousness,

ness, and to agree unto this way which God hath found out; it is to value and highly esteem of Christ Jesus, as the treasure sufficient to enrich poor man, and with the heart to believe this record, that there is life enough in him for men; it is to please this invention, and to acquiesce in it, as the only way to true happiness; it is to point towards this Mediator, as God holdeth him out in the gospel, with desire to lay the stress of our whole state on him. This is that which is called faith or *believing*, the *receiving of Christ*, or *believing on his name*, John i. 12. This is that *believing on the Lord Jesus Christ*, commanded unto the jailor for his safety, Acts xvi. 31. This agreeth to all the descriptions of justifying faith in the scripture. This doth answer the type of looking to the brasen serpent lifted up in the wilderness, John iii. 14. 15. And this is supposed in all these ordinary actings of faith, to which promises are annexed in the scripture; and will be found in all who have got the new heart from God, and it will be found in none else.

II. As to the *second* thing, *viz.* That this is the necessary duty of all such who would

would be in favour with God, and secure their souls; it appeareth thus:

1. This closing with God's device, or believing in Christ, is commanded every where in scripture by the Lord, as the condition of the new covenant, giving title and right unto all the spiritual blessings of the same; for it is upon the matter, the receiving of Christ. This is commanded, whilst God bids men *come and buy*, that is, impropriate all, by closing with that device, Is. lv. 1. The *weary* are commanded to *come unto him* thus, for their *rest*, Matth. xi. 28. 'This 'is his commandment, that we should 'believe on the name of his Son Jesus 'Christ,' 1 John iii. 23. This is enough to prove it a duty incumbent. But further, it is such a duty, as only giveth title and right to a sonship; for, only they who receive him, are privileged to be sons, John i. 12. 'But as many as re-'ceived him, to them gave he power to 'become the sons of God, even to them 'that believe on his name.'

2. It appeareth to be the necessary duty of all, thus. No less than this doth give a meeting unto God, offering himself to be our God in Christ; and no less than this doth answer our profession, as

we

we are in covenant with him, as members of his viſible church. The Lord offereth to be our God in Chriſt; if we do not cloſe with the offer, laying aſide all thoughts of other ways by which we may attain to happineſs, we give no meeting to him. He ſaith, 'This is my be-'loved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; 'hear ye him,' Matth. xvii. 5. If we cloſe not with the offer, we give no anſwer unto God. Moreover, we are all 'baptized 'in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 'for the remiſſion of ſins,' Acts ii. 38. Now, unleſs we cloſe with Chriſt, as ſaid is, we falſify that profeſſion; therefore, ſince this is the thing which doth anſwer God's offer in the goſpel, and maketh good our profeſſion as members of his church, it is a neceſſary duty lying upon us.

3. Whatſoever a man hath elſe, if he do not thus cloſe with God's device anent Chriſt Jeſus, and do not receive him, it doth not avail, either as to the accepting of his perſon, or of his performances, or as to the ſaving of his ſoul. Men are accepted only in Chriſt the beloved, Eph. i. 6. Abel and his offering are accepted by faith, Heb. xi. 4. 'Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe 'God,'

'God,' Heb. xi. 6. And 'he that be-
'lieveth not, is condemned already, and
'shall not see life, but the wrath of God
'abideth on him,' John iii. 18. 36. For want of this, no external title doth avail: the children of the kingdom are cast out if this be wanting, Matth. viii. 10. 11. 12. The people of Israel are like other Heathens, in regard of a graceless state, lying open to the wrath of God, Jer. ix. 25. 26. 'Behold, the days come, saith
'the Lord, that I will punish all them
'which are circumcised with the uncir-
'cumcised, Egypt, and Judah, and Edom
'----for all these nations are uncircum-
'cised, and all the house of Israel are
'uncircumcised in the heart.' If men do not believe that he who was slain at Jerusalem, who was called Christ Jesus, and witnessed unto by the prophets, and declared to be the Son of God by many mighty works; I say, if men do not believe that he is the way, and close not with him as the only way, they shall die in their sins, John viii. 24. 'I said
'therefore unto you, that ye shall die
'in your sins: for if ye believe not that
'I am he, ye shall die in your sins.'

We say then, it is a most necessary duty thus to close with Christ Jesus, as

the

the bleſſed relief appointed for ſinners. Every one who is come to years of underſtanding, and heareth this goſpel, is obliged to take to heart his own loſt condition, and God's gracious offer of peace and ſalvation through Chriſt Jeſus; and ſpeedily to flee from the wrath to come, by accepting and cloſing with this offer, heartily acquieſcing therein as a ſatisfying way for ſaving of poor ſinners. And, that all may be the more encouraged to ſet about this duty, when they hear him praying them to be reconciled unto him, let them remember that peace and ſalvation is offered to the people in univerſal terms, to all without exception; *If any man will*, he ſhall be welcome, Rev. xxii. 17. If any *thirſt*, although after that which will never profit, yet they ſhall be welcome here, on the condition foreſaid, Iſ. lv. 2. 3. All are *commanded* to believe, 1 John iii. 23. 'This is his 'commandment, that we ſhould be-'lieve on the name of his Son Jeſus 'Chriſt.' The *promiſes* are to all who are externally *called* by the goſpel. God excludes none, if they do not exclude themſelves, Acts ii. 39. 'The promiſe 'is unto you, and to your children,

'and

'and to all that are afar off, even as 'many as the Lord our God shall call.' So that if any have a mind for the thing, they may come forward, he will in no wise cast them out, John vi. 37. being 'able to save to the uttermost 'them who come to God through 'him,' Heb. vii. 25. And these who have long delayed to take this matter to heart, had now the more need to look to it, lest what belongs to their peace, be hid from their eyes. But all these words will not take effect with people, until God pour out his Spirit from on high, Is. xxxii. 15. to cause men approach unto God in Christ; yet we must still press mens duty upon them, and obtest and charge them by the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, and their reckoning to him in that day, that they give the Lord no rest, until he send out that Spirit, which he will give to them who ask it, Luke xi. 13. and cause them know what belongs unto their peace, and bring them up to their duty.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

What is previously required of those that would believe on Christ Jesus.

III. WE come now to speak of the *third* thing, *viz.* What is previously required of those who are to perform this duty. Men must not rashly, inconsiderately, and ignorantly rush in upon this matter, saying, They please that device of saving sinners by Christ, and will acquiesce and rest on him for safety: often men do deceive themselves here, and do imagine that they have done the thing. We shall therefore hold out some things prerequired in a person who is to close with Christ Jesus; which although we offer not as positive qualifications, fitting a man for Christ that way, Is. lv. 1. 'Come----without money, and without price;' yet they are such things, as without them a man cannot knowingly and cordially perform the duty of believing on Christ Jesus.

Beside the common principles which are to be supposed in those who live under gospel-ordinances, as the knowledge that men have immortal souls;

that soul and body will be united again at the last day; that there is a heaven and hell, one of which will be the everlasting lot of all men; that the Old and New Testament is the true word of God, and the rule of faith and manners; that every man is by nature void of the grace of God, and is an enemy unto God, and an heir of condemnation; that reconciliation is only by the Mediator Christ Jesus; that faith unites unto him, and is the condition of the new covenant; that holiness is the fruit of true faith, and is to be studied, as that without which no man shall see God: I say, beside these things, the knowledge of which is necessary, it is required of him who would believe on Christ Jesus, *first*, That he take to heart his natural condition. And here he must know some things, and also be very serious about them: I say, he must know some things, as,

1. That as he was born a rebel and outlaw unto God; so he hath by many actual transgressions disobliged God, and ratified the forfeiture of his favour; yea, a man should know many particular instances of his rebellion on all hands, as that he is a liar, Sabbath-breaker,

breaker, blasphemer, or the like, as Paul speaketh very particularly of himself afterwards, 1 Tim. i. 13.

2. The man must know, that the wrath of God denounced in scripture, is standing in force against those very sins whereof he is guilty, and so consequently he is the party undoubtedly against whom God, who cannot lie, hath denounced war. A man must know, that when the scripture saith, 'Cursed 'is he that offereth a corrupt thing 'unto God,' Mal. i. 14. it speaketh against him for his superficial service performed unto God with the outward man, when his heart was far off. When the word saith, 'The Lord will not 'hold him guiltless that taketh his 'name in vain,' Exod. xx. 7. the man must know, it speaketh against himself, who hath often carelessly profaned that dreadful Name, before which all knees should bow, Phil. ii. 10. and which his enemies do take in vain, Psal. cxxxix. 20. When the word saith, 'Cursed is 'he that doth the work of the Lord 'negligently,' Jer. xlviii. 10. the man must know that it speaks against himself, who hath irreverently, with much wandering of heart, and drowsiness,

heard the word preached; and without sense, faith or understanding, hath often prayed before him. When the word saith, 'Wo be unto him that giveth 'his neighbour drink, and putteth his 'bottle to him, to make him drunk 'also, that he may look on his naked-'ness,' Hab. ii. 15. 16. the man must know that it is spoken against himself, who hath gloried in making his neighbour drunk, and that dreadful wrath is determined by the Lord against him, according to that scripture. When the word saith, 'God will judge unclean per-'sons,' Heb. xiii. 4. 'and will close them 'out of the new Jerusalem, and they shall 'have their part in the lake which burn-'eth with fire and brimstone,' Rev. xxi. 8. the man must know that the scripture speaketh these very words against him, he being an unclean person: so that he is the person against whom the curses of the law do directly strike.

3. A man must know that he hath nothing of his own to procure his peace, and to set him free of the hazard under which he lieth; because all his righteousness is as an unclean thing, Is. lxiv. 6. His prayers, his other service done to God, his alms-deeds, *&c.* are not pass-

pass-gilt before God, since they came not from a right principle in his heart, and were not performed in a right way, nor upon a right account, nor for a right end: his sacrifices have been an abomination unto God, Prov. xxi. 27.

4. He must know, that as he is void of all the saving graces of the Spirit, as the true love of God, the true fear of his name, godly sorrow for sin, *&c.* so particularly, that he wants faith in Christ, who taketh burden for all them who believe on him. Until a man know this, he will still leave all his debt and burden, without care or regard, any where else, before he bring it to the common Cautioner.

Now not only must a man know these things, as I said before, but must also very seriously take them to heart, that is to say, he must be affected with these things, and be in sad earnest about them, as he useth to be in other cases wherein he useth to be most serious; yea, he should be more in earnest here than in other cases, because it is of greater concernment unto him. This seriousness produceth,

1. A taking of salvation to heart more than any thing else. Shall men

be obliged to seek first the kingdom of God? Matth. vi. 33. Is there but one thing necessary? Luke x. 42. Shall Paul count all things loss and dung for this matter? Phil. iii. 8. Is a man a loser gaining all the world, if he lose his soul? Mark viii. 36. Shall this be the only ground of joy, that mens names are written in the book of life? Luke x. 20. And shall not men, who would be reckoned serious, take their soul and salvation more to heart than any thing else? Surely it cannot fail. Let none deceive themselves. If the hazard of their soul, and the salvation thereof, and how to be in favour with God, hath not gone nearer to their heart than any thing in the world beside, it cannot be presumed upon just grounds, that they ever knew sin, or God, or the everlastingness of his wrath aright.

2. This seriousness breaketh the man's heart, and fainteth the stoutness of it, and leadeth it out to sorrow, as one doth for a first-born, Zech. xii. 10. I grant their sorrow will better suit that scripture afterwards, when they apprehend Christ pierced by their sins.

3. It leadeth the man to a self-loathing. A man taking up himself so, can-

not

not but loath himself for his abominations, whereby he hath destroyed himself. There is somewhat of that spirit of revenge, which is mentioned as a fruit of true repentance, 2 Cor. vii. 11. 'This 'self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it 'wrought in you----yea, what revenge!'

4. This seriousness doth make the man peremptory to find relief; since it is not in himself, he dare not put off and delay his business, as before: and this is indeed required, that he find himself so pursued and put to it, that he flee for refuge somewhere. I grant some have a higher and some a lesser degree of this seriousness, as we shewed in the former part of this treatise: but if we speak of the Lord's ordinary way of working with those who are come to age, we say, they must very seriously take their soul's estate to heart, despairing of help in themselves, since the whole need not a physician, but those who are sick, Matth. ix. 12. As for the measure, we plead only that which probably doth suppose, that a man will be induced thereby to transact cordially with Christ, on any terms

terms he doth offer himself to be closed with.

The *second* thing prerequired of him who would believe on Christ Jesus, is, He must know and take to heart the way of escape from God's wrath: the Spirit must convince him of that righteousness. Here a man must understand somewhat distinctly, that God hath devised a way to save poor lost man by Jesus Christ, whose perfect righteousness hath satisfied offended justice, and procured pardon and everlasting favour to all those whom he persuadeth by this gospel to accept of God's offer, Acts xiii. 38. 39. 'Be it 'known unto you therefore,---that 'through this man is preached unto 'you the forgiveness of sins; and by 'him all that believe are justified from 'all things'----John i. 12. 'As many 'as received him, to them gave he 'power to become the sons of God, 'even to them that believe on his 'name.' So that no person is excluded, of whatsoever rank or condition, whatsoever hath been his former way, unless he be guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is a malicious hatred and rejection of the remedy appointed

pointed for ſinners, as we ſhall hear; for, all manner of ſin is forgiven unto thoſe who accept of the offer in God's way, Matth. xii. 31. 'He is able to 'ſave to the uttermoſt thoſe that come 'unto God through him,' Heb. vii. 25.

The *third* thing prerequired, is, A man muſt know, that as God hath not excluded him from the relief appointed, ſo he is willing to be reconciled unto men through Chriſt, and hath obliged men to cloſe with him through Chriſt Jeſus, and ſo to impropriate that ſalvation to themſelves. He not only invites all to come, Iſ. lv. 1. 2. and welcometh all that come, as we find in the goſpel, and commendeth thoſe who come, as the centurion, Matth. viii. 10. and the woman of Canaan, Matth. xv. 28. and chideth for not coming and cloſing with him, John v. 40. 'And ye will 'not come to me, that ye might have 'life;' and condemneth for not cloſing ſo with him, John iii. 18. 'He that 'believeth not, is condemned already;' but alſo he commandeth all to believe on Chriſt, 1 John iii. 23. 'This is his 'commandment, that we ſhould believe 'on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt.' So as a man is not to queſtion the Lord's willingneſs

willingness to receive men who go to Christ honestly, for God hath abundantly cleared that in scripture. Unless that a man know so much, he will scarcely dare to lay his heart open for that noble device of saving sinners, or adventure his own weight and stress upon Christ Jesus.

The *fourth* thing prerequired, is, The man who would close with Christ Jesus, must resolve to break all covenants with hell and death, Is. xxviii. 15. Whatsoever known evil men are engaged into, they must resolve to forego it; for, 'there 'is no concord between Christ and Be-'lial,' 2 Cor. vi. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. The Lord requireth that they who would expect him to be for them, should not be for another, Hos. iii. 3. This is far from evangelic repentance, which I grant doth not precede a man's closing with Christ by faith: there is little here beyond a misregard of these things unto which a man was formerly devoted, and a slighting what he was mad upon, because he seeth himself destroyed thereby, and relief now offered; whereupon his heart beginneth to be more intent than formerly it was. After this, when Christ is lookt upon alone, his worth and beauty

beauty doth appear, so as among all the gods there is none like unto him, and he looketh out as a sufficient covering of the eyes to all who get him: upon which the heart loveth God's device in the new covenant, and loveth to lay its weight upon Christ rather than any other way, bending towards him; and so the man becometh a believer.

Now, I will not say that all these things whereof we have spoken, are formally, orderly and distinctly found in every person before he close with God in Christ; for the way of the heart with Christ may be added to the four wonderful things, Prov. xxx. 18. 19. it is hard to trace the heart in its translation from darkness to light; yet we hold out the most ordinary and likely way, to him who doth ask the way; debarring thereby ignorant and senseless persons from meddling, and discharging them to pretend to any interest in him whilst they remain such.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The properties and native consequences of true believing.

IV. THE *fourth* thing we proposed to speak to, is, The properties of this duty, when rightly gone about. I shall only hint a few.

1. Believing on Christ must be *personal;* a man himself and in his own proper person must close with Christ Jesus; 'The just shall live by his faith,' Hab. ii. 4. This faith, that it will not suffice for a man's safety and relief, that he is in covenant with God, as a born member of the visible church, by virtue of the parents subjection to God's ordinances: neither will it suffice, that the person had the initiating seal of baptism added, and that he then virtually engaged to seek salvation by Christ's blood, as all infants do: neither doth it suffice, that men are come of believing parents, their faith will not instate their children into a right to the spiritual blessings of the covenant: neither will it suffice, that parents did in some respect engage for their children, and give them away unto God: all these things do not avail.

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The children of the kingdom and of godly predecessors are cast out; unless a man, in his own person, put out faith in Christ Jesus, and with his own heart please and acquiesce in that device of saving sinners, he cannot be saved. I grant this faith is given unto him by Christ, but certain it is, that it must be personal.

2. This duty must be *cordial* and *hearty*; 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness,' Rom. x. 10. A man must be sincere, and without guile in closing with Christ, judging him the only covering of the eyes, not hankering after another way. The matter must not swim only in the head or understanding, but it must be in the heart; the man not only must be persuaded that Christ is the way, but affectionately persuaded of it, loving and liking the thing, having complacency in it; so that it is 'all a man's desire,' as David speaketh of the covenant, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. If a man be cordial and affectionate in any thing, surely he must be so here in this 'one thing that is necessary.' It must not be simply a fancy in the head, it must be a heart-business, a soul-business; yea, not a business in the outer

court of affections, but in the flower of affections, and in the innermost cabinet of the soul, where Christ is formed. Shall a man be cordial in any thing, and not in this, which doth comprise all his chief interests, and his everlasting state within it? Shall the Lord be said to 'rejoice over a man, as a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride?' Is. lxii. 5. and to 'rest in his love with joy?' Zeph. iii. 17.; and shall not the heart of man go out and meet him here? The heart, or nothing; love, or nothing; marriage-love, which goeth from heart to heart; love of espousals, or nothing, Prov xxiii. 26. 'My son, give me thine heart.' 1 Cor. xiii. 2. 3. 'Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' I will not say, that there is in all, as soon as they believe, a prevailing sensible love, which maketh sick; but there must be in believing, a rational and kindly love, so well grounded, and deeply engaging, that many waters cannot quench it. 'It is strong as death, and jealousy in it burneth as fire,' Cant. viii. 6. 7.

3. The *third* property or qualification of

of believing, as it goeth out after Christ, it must be *rational*. Hereby I mean, that the man should move towards God in Christ, in knowledge and understanding, taking up God's device of saving sinners by Christ, as the scripture doth hold it out, not fancying a Christ to himself, otherwise than the gospel speaketh of him, nor another way of relief by him than the word of God holdeth out. Therefore we find *knowledge* joined to the *covenant* between God and man as a requisite, Jer. xxiv. 7. 'And I will 'give them an heart to know me, that 'I am the Lord, and they shall be my 'people, and I will be their God.' Jer. xxxi. 34. 'And they shall teach no more 'every man his neighbour, and every 'man his brother, saying, Know ye the 'Lord: for they shall all know me, from 'the least of them unto the greatest of 'them, saith the Lord.' I mean here also, that a man be in calmness of spirit, and, as it were, in his cold blood in closing with Christ Jesus; not in a simple fit of affection, which soon evanisheth, Matth. xiii. 20. 'He that re-'ceived the seed into stony places, the 'same is he that heareth the word, and 'anon with joy receiveth it:' nor in a

distemper through some outward distress, as the people were, Psal. lxxviii. 34. 'When he slew them, then they 'sought him----and proved not stedfast 'in the covenant:' nor under a temptation of some outward temporary interest, as Simon Magus was when he believed, Acts viii. A man must act here rationally, as being master of himself, in some measure able to judge of the good or evil of the thing as it stands before him.

4. The *fourth* is, faith, as it goeth out rationally, so it goeth out *resolutely*. The poor distressed people in the gospel did most resolutely cast themselves upon Christ. This resoluteness of spirit, is in order to all difficulties that lie in the way; violence is offered to these. The man whose heart is a shaping out for Christ Jesus, cannot say, 'There is 'a lion in the street,' Prov. xxvi. 13. If he cannot have access by the door, he will break through the roof of the house, with that man, Luke v. 19. He often doth not regard that which the world calleth discretion or prudence, like Zaccheus climbing up on a tree to see Christ, when faith was breeding in his bosom, Luke xix. This resoluteness

of

of ſpirit looketh towards what inconveniencies may follow, and waveth all theſe; at leaſt reſolving over all theſe, like a wiſe builder who reckoneth the expence before-hand, Luke xiv. 28. This reſoluteneſs is alſo in order to all a man's idols, and ſuch weights as would eaſily beſet him, if he did not bend after Chriſt over them all, like that blind man who did caſt his garment from him, when Chriſt called him, Mark x. 50. This reſoluteneſs in the ſoul proceedeth from deſperate ſelf-neceſſity within the man, as it was with the jailor, Acts xvi. 30.; and from the ſovereign command of God, obliging the man to move towards Chriſt, 1 John iii. 23. 'This is his commandment, 'that we ſhould believe on the name 'of his Son Jeſus Chriſt;' and from the good report gone abroad of God, that he putteth none away that come unto him through Chriſt, John vi. 37. but doth commend ſuch as do adventure over the greateſt difficulties, as the woman of Canaan, Matth. xv. 28. But above all, this reſoluteneſs doth proceed from the arm of JEHOVAH, ſecretly and ſtrongly drawing the ſinner towards Chriſt, John vi. 44. 'No man

'can come to me, except the Father 'which hath sent me, draw him.'

I will not say, that every one, closing with Christ in the offers of the gospel, hath all the foresaid thoughts formally in his mind; yet upon search it will be found, if he be put to it, or put in mind of these things, they are then aloft in the soul.

By what is said, it doth manifestly appear, that many in the visible church had need to do somewhat further for securing of their soul, when they come to years of discretion, than is found to have been done by them before, in the covenant between God and the church, sealed to them in baptism.

By what is said also, there is a competent guard upon the free grace of God in the gospel, held out through Christ Jesus; so as ignorant, senseless, profane men cannot, with any shadow of reason, pretend to an interest in it. It is true, believing in Christ, and closing with him as a perfect Saviour, seemeth easy, and every godless man saith, that he believeth on him: but they deceive themselves, since their soul hath never cordially, rationally, and resolutely gone out after Christ Jesus,

Jesus, as we have said. It may be some wicked men have been enlightened, Heb. vi. 4. and have found some reel in their fear, 'Felix trembled,' Acts xxiv. 25. or in their joy, 'He that received the seed into stony places, the 'same is he that heareth the word, and 'anon with joy receiveth it,' Matth. xiii. 20. and Herod heard John gladly, Mark vi. 20.: but not having engaged their heart in approaching to God, Jer. xxx. 21. have either sitten down in that common work, as their sanctuary, until the trial came, Matth. xiii. 20. 21. 'When tribulation or persecution a-'riseth because of the word, by and 'by he is offended;' or they return back with the dog to their vomit, from which they had in some measure escaped by the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, 2 Pet. ii. 20. 21. 22.; or they utterly fall away to the hatred and malicious despising and persecuting of Christ and his interests; from whence hardly can they be recovered, Heb. vi. 4. 5. 6. and x. 26. 29. Which things should provoke men to be serious in this great business.

V. We come now to speak to the *fifth* thing proposed, and that is, What be

be the native consequences of true believing. I shall reduce what I will speak of them to these two, *viz.* Union with God, and communion.

First then, I say, when a sinner closeth with Christ Jesus, as said is, there is presently an admirable *union*, a strange oneness between God and the man. As the husband and wife, head and body, root and branches, are not to be reckoned two, but one; so Christ, or God in Christ, and the sinner closing with him by faith, are one; 'We are 'members of his body, of his flesh, 'and of his bones,' *&c.* Eph. v. 30. 31. 32. 'He that is so joined unto the 'Lord, is one spirit,' 1 Cor. vi. 17. 'As the Father is in the Son, and Christ 'in the Father; so believers are one in 'the Father and the Son: they are one, 'as the Father and the Son are one. 'The Father in Christ, and Christ in 'believers, that they may be made per-'fect in one,' John xvii. 21. 22. 23. 26. O what a strange interweaving, and indissoluble knot there!

Because of this union betwixt God and the believer, 1. They can never hate one another. Henceforth the Lord will

will never hate the believer: 'As no 'man hateth his own fleſh at any time, 'but cheriſheth and nouriſheth it, ſo 'doth Chriſt his people,' Eph. v. 29. He may be angry, ſo as to correct and chaſtiſe the man that is a believer; but all he doth to him, is for his good and advantage: 'All the Lord's paths muſt 'be mercy and truth to him,' Pſal. xxv. 10. 'All things muſt work to-'gether for good to him,' Rom. viii. 28. On the other ſide, the believer can never hate God maliciouſly; for, 'He that is born of God, ſinneth not,' 1 John iii. 9. For the Lord hath reſolved and ordained things ſo, that his hand ſhall undoubtedly ſo be upon all believers for good, that they ſhall never get leave to hate him, and be ſo plucked out of his hand.

2. Becauſe of this union, there is a ſtrange ſympathy and fellow-feeling between God and the believer. The Lord is afflicted with the man's affliction, Iſ. lxiii. 9. He doth tenderly, carefully, and ſeaſonably reſent it, as if he were afflicted with it. 'He who toucheth 'the believer, toucheth the apple of 'the Lord's eye,' Zech. ii. 8. 'He is 'touched with the feeling of their in-'firmities,'

'firmities,' Heb. iv. 15. and 'precious 'in his sight is their blood,' Psal. cxvi. 15. In a word, what is done to them, is done unto him; and what is not done unto them, is not done unto him, Matth. x. 40. 'He that receiveth you, 'receiveth me.' Matth. xxv. 40. 45. 'In 'as much as ye have done it unto one 'of the least of these my brethren, ye 'have done it unto me. In as much 'as ye did it not to one of the least 'of these, ye did it not to me.' On the other part, the zeal of his house fitteth in the heart of the believer, Psal. lxix. 9. The Lord's reproach lighteth on the believer. If it go well with his affairs, that is the business of his people. So there is a strange sympathy between God and believers, all by virtue of the union between them; because of which, men should hate every thing which would compete with him in their love or affections, and should disdain to be slaves to the creatures, since these are the servants of their Lord and Husband, and their servants through him. What a hateful thing for a queen to whore with the servants of her prince and husband? It is also a shame for a believer to be afraid of evil tidings, since the Lord,

Lord, with whom he is one, alone ruleth all things, and doth whatsoever pleaseth him in heaven and earth, 1 Cor. iii. 21. 23. 'All things are yours; 'and ye are Christ's, and Christ is 'God's.' Psal. cxii. 6. 7. 'Surely he 'shall not be moved for ever, he shall 'not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart 'is fixed, trusting in the Lord, his heart 'is established, he shall not be afraid.' Psal. cxv. 3. 'Our God is in the hea-'vens, he hath done whatsoever he 'pleased.'

Secondly, The other great consequence of believing, is an admirable unparallelled *communion;* by virtue whereof, 1. The parties themselves do belong each to other. The Lord is the God of his people: he himself, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is their God, in all his glorious attributes, his justice as well as his mercy, his wisdom, power, holiness, *&c.* for he becometh the God of his people, as he often speaketh in the covenant. On the other part, the believers are his people. In their very persons they are his, as the covenant doth speak: they shall be his people; their head, their heart, their hand, *&c.* whatsoever they are, they are his.

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2. By virtue of this communion, they have a mutual interest in one another's whole goods and gear, in as far as can be useful. All the Lord's word doth belong to the believer, threatenings, as well as promises, for their good; all his ways, all his works of all sorts, special communications, death, devils, even all things, in so far as can be useful 1 Cor. iii. 21. 22. 23. 'All things are 'yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or 'Cephas, or the world, or life, or death 'or things present, or things to come 'all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and 'Christ is God's.' On the other side all which belongeth to the believer is the Lord's; heritage, children, life, wife, credit, *&c.* all is at his disposing; if any of these can be useful to him, the believer is to forego them, else he falsifieth that communion, and declareth himself, in so far, unworthy of Christ: Luke xiv. 26. 'If any man come to me, 'and hate not his father----yea, and his 'life also, he cannot be my disciple.'

3. By virtue of this communion there should be much homeliness and familiarity between God and the believer. The Lord may meddle with any thing which doth belong to the believer, and do un-

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to him what ſeemeth good to him; and the man is not to miſtake, or ſay unto God, 'What doſt thou?' except in ſo far as concerneth his duty; yea, he is ſtill to ſay in every caſe, 'Good is the 'word and will of the Lord,' Iſ. xxxix. 8. 2 Kings iv. 23. 26. On the other part, the believer may in an humble way, be homely and familiar with God in Chriſt; he may come with boldneſs to the throne of grace, and not uſe a number of compliments in his addreſſes unto God, Heb. iv. 16. for he is no more a ſtranger unto God, Eph. ii. 19. ſo that he needs not ſpeak unto God, as one who hath acquaintance to make every hour, as many profeſſors do; and it maketh a huge inconſiſtency in their religion.

The believer alſo may lay open all his heart unto God, 1 Sam. i..15. 'I have 'poured out my ſoul before the Lord,' and impart all his ſecrets unto him, and all his temptations, without fear of a miſtake. The believer alſo may inquire into what God doth, in ſo far as may concern his own duty, or in ſo far as may ward off miſtakes of the Lord's way, and reconcile it with his word; ſo Job xiii. 15. 'Though he ſlay me, yet will

'I trust in him: but I will maintain 'mine own ways before him.' The believer is a friend in this respect, as knowing what the Master doth. See Gen. xviii. 23. *&c.* Jer. xii. 1. Is. lxiii. 17.

The believer also may be homely with God, to go in daily with his failings, and seek repentance, pardon, and peace through Christ's advocateship, Acts v. 31. 'Him hath God exalted with his 'right hand, to be a Prince and a Savi-'our, for to give repentance to Israel, 'and forgiveness of sins.' 1 John ii. 1. 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate 'with the Father, Jesus Christ the righ-'teous.' O how often in one day may the believer plead pardon, if he intend not to mock God, or to turn grace into wantonness! The Lord hath commanded men to forgive seventy times seven times in one day, and hath hinted there in the parable of a king who took account of his servants, how much more the master will forgive, Matth. xviii. 22.----28.

The believer also may be homely to intrust God with all his outward concernments, for he doth care for these things, Matth. vi. 30. 31. 32. 'If God 'so clothe the grass of the field,----shall 'he

'he not much more clothe you, O ye 'of little faith? Therefore take no 'thought, saying, What shall we eat? 'or what shall we drink? or wherewithal 'shall we be clothed? For your heaven-'ly Father knoweth that ye have need 'of all these things.' 1 Pet. v. 7. 'Cast-'ing all your care upon him, for he 'careth for you.' Yea, the believer may humbly put God to it, to make him forthcoming for him, in all cases, as beseemeth, and to help him to suitable fruit in every season, even grace in time of need, Heb. iv. 16. Yea, how great things may believers seek from him in Christ Jesus, both for themselves and others! 1 John v. 14. 15. 'If we ask any 'thing according to his will, he hear-'eth us.' John xiv. 13. 'Whatsoever 'ye shall ask in my name, that will I 'do.' Is. xlv. 11. 'Ask me of things 'to come concerning my sons, and con-'cerning the work of my hands com-'mand ye me.' It is the shame and great prejudice of his people, that they do not improve that communion with God more than they do: Christ may justly upbraid them, that they ask nothing in his name, John xvi. 24.

By what is said, it doth appear of

how great consequence this duty of believing is, by which a man closeth with Christ Jesus, whom the Father hath sealed, and given for a covenant to the people. It is so honourable for God, answering his very design, and serving his interest in the whole contrivement and manifestation of the gospel; and it is so advantageous to men, that Satan and an evil heart of unbelief do mightily oppose it, by moving objections against it. I shall hint some most ordinary.

CHAP. V.

Objections, taken from a man's unworthiness, and the heinousness of his sin, answered.

Object. I Am so base, worthless, and feckless of myself, that I think it were high presumption for me to meddle with Christ Jesus, or the salvation purchased at the rate of his blood.

Answ. It is true, all the children of Adam are base and naughty before him, who chargeth his angels with folly, Job iv. 18. 'All nations are less than no-'thing, and vanity before him,' Is. xl. 17. There is such a disproportion between

tween God and men, that unless he himself had devised that covenant, and of his own free will had offered so to transact with men, it had been high treason for men or angels to have imagined, that God should have humbled himself, and become a servant, and have taken on our nature, and have united it by a personal union to the blessed Godhead; and that he should have subjected himself to the shameful death of the cross; and all this, that men, who were rebels, should be reconciled unto God, and be made eternally happy, by being in his holy company for ever.

But I say, all that was his own device and free choice: yea, moreover, if God had not sovereignly commanded men so to close with him in and through Christ, Is. lv. 1. 2. 3. Matth. xi. 28. 1 John iii. 23. 2 Cor. v. 20. no man durst have made use of that device of his. So then, although with Abigail I may say, 'Let me be but a servant to wash the feet 'of the servants of my Lord,' 1 Sam. xxv. 41.; yet since he hath in his holy wisdom devised that way, and knoweth how to be richly glorified in it, Eph. i. 18. 'The eyes of your understanding 'being enlightened, that ye may know

'----what is the riches of the glory of 'his inheritance in the saints;' John xvii. 10. 'All mine are thine, and thine 'are mine, and I am glorified in them;' and he hath commanded me, as I shall be answerable in the great day, to close with him in Christ, as said is; I dare not disobey, nor inquire into the reasons of his contrivements and commands, but must adventure on the business, as I would not be found to 'frustrate the 'grace of God,' Gal. ii. 21. and in a manner disappoint the gospel, and falsify the record which God hath borne of his Son, that 'there is life enough in him 'for men,' 1 John v. 10. 11. and so 'make 'God a liar,' and add that rebellion to all my former transgressions.

Object. I am a person singularly sinful, beyond any I know; therefore I dare not presume to go near unto Christ Jesus, or look after that salvation which is through his righteousness.

Answ. Is your sin beyond the drunkenness and incest of Lot; adultery, covered with murder, in David; idolatry, and horrid apostasy in Solomon; idolatry, murder, and witchcraft in Manasseh; anger against God, and his way, in Jonah; forswearing of Christ

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in Peter, after he was forewarned, and had vowed the contrary; bloody perſecution in Paul, making the ſaints to blaſpheme, *&c.?* (but wo to him who is emboldened to ſin by theſe inſtances recorded in ſcripture, and adduced here, to the commendation of the free and rich grace of God, and to encourage poor penitent ſinners to flee unto Chriſt): I ſay, are your ſins beyond theſe? Yet all theſe obtained pardon through Chriſt, as the ſcripture doth ſhew.

Know therefore, that all ſins do lie alike level before the free grace of God, who loveth freely, Hoſ. xiv. 4. and looketh not to leſs or more ſin. If the perſon have a heart to come unto him through Chriſt, then he is able to ſave to the utmoſt, Heb. vii. 25. Yea, it is more provoking before God, not to cloſe with Chriſt when the offer cometh to a man, than all the reſt of his tranſgreſſions are; for 'he that believeth not, 'hath made God a liar, in that re-'cord he hath borne of life in the Son,' 1 John v. 10. 11. 'And he who doth 'not believe, ſhall be condemned for 'not believing on the Son of God,' John iii. 18.; that ſhall be the main thing

thing in his dittay. So that much sin cannot excuse a man, if he scare at Christ, and shift his offer, since God hath openly declared, that 'this is a 'faithful saying, and worthy of all ac- 'ceptation, Christ came to save sinners, 'whereof I am chief.' Even he who is chief of sinners in his own apprehension, is bound to believe and accept this saying, 1 Tim. i. 15.

Object. My sins have some aggravating circumstances beyond the same sins in other persons, which doth much terrify me.

Answ. What can the aggravations of thy sins be, which are not parallelled in the forecited examples? Is thy sin against great light? So behoved many of these we spake of before. Was it against singular mercies and deliverances? So was that of Lot's and Noah's drunkenness Was thy sin done with much deliberation? So was David's, whilst he wrote the letter against Uriah. Was it against, or after any singular manifestation of God? So was Solomon's. Was it by a small and despicable temptation? So was that of Jonah, and of Peter, if we consider the heinousness of their transgression. Hast thou

reiterated

reiterated the ſin, and committed it over again? So did Lot, ſo did Peter, ſo did Jehoſhaphat in joining with Ahab and Jehoram, 1 Kings xxii. 2 Kings iii. Are there many groſs ſins concurring together in thee? So were there in Manaſſeh. Haſt thou ſtood long out in rebellion? (that, as the former, is thy ſhame: but) ſo did the thief on the croſs; he ſtood it out to the laſt gaſp, Luke xxiii. 42. 43. If yet thou haſt an ear to hear, thou art commanded to hear, Matth. xiii. 9. Although thou haſt long ſpent thy money for that which is not bread, Iſ. lv. 1. 2. thou haſt the greater need now to make haſte, and to flee for refuge; and if thou do ſo, he ſhall welcome thee, and in no wiſe caſt thee out, John vi. 37. eſpecially, ſince he hath uſed no preſcription of time in ſcripture. So that all thoſe aggravations of thy ſin will not excuſe thy ſhifting of the Lord's offer.

Object. In all theſe inſtances given, you have not named the particulars whereof I am guilty; nor know I any who ever obtained mercy before God, being guilty of ſuch things as are in me.

Anſw. It is hard to condeſcend upon

on every particular transgression which may vex the conscience; yea, lesser sins than some of those I have mentioned, may hugely disquiet, if the Lord blow the fire. But, for thy satisfaction, I shall condescend upon some truths of scripture, which do reach sins and cases more universally, than any man can do particularly. See Exod. xxxiv. 7. 'God pardoneth iniquity, transgression 'and sin,' that is, all manner of sin. Ezek. xviii. 21. 22. 30. 'If a man turn 'from all his wickedness, it shall no 'more be remembered, or prove his 'ruin.' John vi. 37. 'Him that cometh, 'he will in no wise cast out;' that is, whatsoever be his sins, or the aggravations of them. John iii. 16. 'Whoso-'ever believeth shall have everlasting life;' that is, without exception of any sin, or any case. Heb. vii. 25. 'He is able 'to save to the utmost those who come 'to God through him.' No man can sufficiently declare what is God's uttermost. Matth. xii. 31. 'All manner of 'sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven 'unto men;' that is, there is no sort of sin, whereof one instance shall not be forgiven in one person or other, 'except 'the sin against the Holy Ghost.' These

and

and the like ſcriptures, do carry all ſorts of ſin before them; ſo that, let thy ſins be what they will, or can be, they may be ſunk in one of theſe truths, ſo as thy ſin can be no excuſe to thee for ſhifting the offer of peace and ſalvation through Chriſt, ſince any man who will, is allowed to come and take, Rev. xxii. 17.

We will not multiply words: the great God of heaven and earth hath ſovereignly commanded all who ſee their need of relief, to betake themſelves unto Chriſt Jeſus, and to cloſe cordially with God's device of ſaving ſinners by him, laying aſide all objections and excuſes, as they ſhall be anſwerable unto him in the day he ſhall judge the quick and the dead, and ſhall drive away out of his preſence all theſe who would dare to ſay, their ſins and condition were ſuch, as that they durſt not adventure upon Chriſt's perfect righteouſneſs for their relief, notwithſtanding of the Lord's own command often interpoſed, and in a manner his credit engaged.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Object. I Suspect I am guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and so am incapable of pardon; and therefore I need not think of believing on Christ Jesus for saving of my soul.

Answ. Although none should charge this sin on themselves, or on others, unless they can prove and instruct the charge according to Christ's example, Matth. xii. 5. 26. 32.; yet for satisfying of the doubt, I shall, 1. Shew what is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, properly so called, because there be some gross sins which people do unwarrantably judge to be this unpardonable sin. 2. I shall shew what is the sin against the Holy Ghost. 3. I shall draw some conclusions in answer directly to the objection.

As for the *first*, There be many gross sins, which although as all other sins, they be sins against the Holy Ghost, who is God equal and one with the Father and the Son, and are done against some of his operations and motions, yet are they not *the sin against the Holy Ghost*,

Ghost, which is the unpardonable sin. As,

1. Blaspheming of God under bodily tortures, is not that sin; for some saints fell into this, Acts xxvi. 11. 'And 'I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme:' much less blaspheming of God in a fit of distraction or frenzy, for a man is not a free rational agent at that time; and he that 'spareth his 'people, as a father doth the son that 'serveth him,' Mal. iii. 17. and 'pitieth 'them that fear him, as a father pitieth 'his children,' Psal. ciii. 13. so doth he spare and pity in these rovings, for so would our fathers according to the flesh do, if we blasphemed them in a fit of distraction. Much less are horrid blasphemies against God, darted in upon the soul, and not allowed there, this unpardonable sin; for such things were offered to Christ, Matth. iv. and are often cast in upon the saints.

2. The hating of good in others, whilst I am not convinced that it is good, but in my light do judge it to be evil; yea, the speaking against it, yea, the persecuting of it in that case, is not the sin against the Holy Ghost; for all

these will be found in Paul before he was converted; and he obtained mercy, because he did these things ignorantly.

3. Heart-rising at the thriving of others in the work and way of God, whilst I love it in myself; yea, the rising of heart against providence, which often expresseth itself against the creatures nearest our hand; yea, this rising of heart entertained and maintained, (though they be horrid things leading towards that unpardonable sin, yet) are not that sin; for these may be in the saints, proceeding from self-love, which cannot endure to be darkened by another, and proceeding from some cross in their idol under a fit of temptation. The most part of all this was in Jonah, Jon. iv.

4. Not only are not decays in what once was in the man, and falling into gross sins against light, after the receiving of the truth, this unpardonable sin; for then many of the saints in scripture were undone: but further, apostasy from much of the truth, is not that sin; for that was in Solomon, and in the church of Corinth and Galatia. Yea, denying, yea, forswearing of the most fundamental truth under a great temptation,

tion, is not this sin; for then Peter had been undone.

5. As resisting, quenching, grieving, and vexing of the Spirit of God by many sinful ways, are not this unpardonable sin; for they are charged with these who are called to repentance in scripture, and not shut out as guilty of this sin: so neither reiterating sin against light, is the sin against the Holy Ghost, although it leadeth towards it; for such was Peter's sin in denying Christ; so was Jehoshaphat's sin in joining with Ahab and Jehoram.

6. Purposes and essays of self-murder, and even purposes of murdering godly men, the party being under a sad fit of temptation; yea, actual self-murder, (although probably it often joineth in the issue with this unpardonable sin, which ought to make every soul look upon the very temptation to it with horror and abhorrency, yet is not the sin against the Holy Ghost. The jailor intended to kill himself, upon a worse account than many poor people do, in the sight and sense of God's wrath, and of their own sin and corruption; yet that jailor obtained pardon, Acts xvi. 27. 34. And Paul before his effectual calling,

was accessary unto the murder of many saints, and intended to kill more, as himself granteth, Acts xxvi. 9. 10. 11. 12.

Although all these are dreadful sins, each of them deserving wrath everlasting, and not being repented of, bring endless vengeance, especially the last cuts of hope of relief, for ought can be expected in an ordinary way; yet none of these is the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost: and so under any of these, there is hope to him that hath an ear to hear the joyful sound of the covenant. All manner of such sin and blasphemy may be forgiven, as is clear in the scripture, where these things are mentioned.

As for the *second* thing. Let us see what the sin against the Holy Ghost is. It is not a simple act of transgression, but a complex of many mischievous things, involving soul and body ordinarily in guilt. We thus describe it: 'It 'is a rejecting and opposing of the chief 'gospel-truth, and way of salvation, 'made out singularly to a man by the 'Spirit of God, in the truth and good 'thereof; and that avowedly, freely, 'wilfully, maliciously, and despitefully, 'breeding hopeless fear.' There be three

three places of scripture which do speak most of this sin; and thence we will prove every part of this description, in so far as may be useful to our present purpose; by which it will appear, that none who have a mind for Christ, need stumble at what is spoken of this sin in scripture. See Matth. xii. 23.----32. Heb. vi. 4. 5. 6. and x. 25.----29.

1*st*, then, Let us consider the object about which this sin, or sinful acting of the man guilty thereof, is conversant, and that is the chief gospel-truth, and way of salvation; both which run to one thing. It is the way which God hath contrived for saving of sinners by Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah and Saviour, by whose death and righteousness men are to be saved, as he hath held forth in the ordinances, confirming the same by many mighty works in scripture tending thereaway. This way of salvation is the object. The Pharisees oppose this, that Christ was the Messiah, Matth. xii. 23. 24. 'And all the people 'said, Is not this the Son of David? 'But when the Pharisees heard it, they 'said, This fellow doth not cast out 'devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of 'the devils.' The wrong is done against

the Son of God, Heb. vi. 6. 'It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame;' and against the blood of the covenant, and the Spirit graciously offering to apply these things, Heb. x. 29. 'Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath troden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?'

2*dly*, In the description, consider the qualification of this object. It is singularly made out to the party by the Spirit of God, both in the truth and good thereof. This faith, (1.) That there must be knowledge of the truth and way of salvation. The Pharisees knew that Christ was the heir, Matth. xxi. 38. 'But when they saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him.' The party hath knowledge, Heb. x. 26. 'But if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.'

'ſins.' (2.) That knowledge of the thing muſt not ſwim only in the head, but there muſt be ſome half-heart perſuaſion of it. Chriſt knew the Phariſees thoughts, Matth. xii. 25. and ſo did judge them, and that the contrary of what they ſpake was made out upon their heart. There is a taſting which is beyond ſimple enlightening, Heb. vi. 4. 5. 'For it is impoſſible for thoſe who 'were once enlightened, and have ta-'ſted of the heavenly gift, and have ta-'ſted the good word of God, and 'the powers of the world to come.' Yea, there is ſuch a perſuaſion ordinarily as leadeth to a deal of outward ſanctification, Heb. x. 29. 'Who hath 'counted the blood of the covenant 'wherewith they were ſanctified, an 'unholy thing.' (3.) This perſuaſion muſt not only be of the verity of the thing, but of the good of it. The party 'taſteth the good word of God, and 'the powers of the world to come,' Heb. vi. 5. and he apprehendeth the thing as eligible. (4.) This perſuaſion is not made out only by ſtrength of argument, but alſo by an enlightening work of God's Spirit, ſhining on the truth, and making it conſpicuous; therefore

therefore is that sin called *the sin against the Holy Ghost*, Matth. xii. 31. Mark iii. 29. The persons are said to have been 'made partakers of the Holy Ghost,' Heb. vi. 4. and to 'do despite unto the 'Spirit of grace,' Heb. x. 29. who was in the neareſt ſtep of a gracious operation with them.

3*dly*, In this deſcription, conſider the acting of the party againſt the object ſo qualified. It is a rejecting and oppoſing of it; which importeth, (1.) That men have once, ſome way at leaſt, been in hands with it, or had the offer of it, as is true of the Phariſees. (2.) That they do reject, even with contempt, what they had of it, or in their offer. The Phariſees deny it, and ſpeak diſdainfully of Chriſt, Matth. xii. 24. 'This fellow 'doth not caſt out devils, but by Beel-'zebub the prince of the devils.' They fall away, intending to put Chriſt to an open ſhame, Heb. vi. 6. (3.) The men ſet themſelves againſt it by the ſpirit of perſecution, as the Phariſees did ſtill. They rail againſt it; therefore it is called *blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, Matth. xii. 24. 31. They would crucify Chriſt again, if they could, Heb. vi. 6. They are adverſaries, Heb. x. 27.

4*thly*,

4*thly*, Consider the properties of this acting. (1.) It is *avowed*, that is, not seeking to shelter or hide itself. The Pharisees speak against Christ publicly, Matth. xii. 24. They would have Christ brought to an open shame, Heb. vi. 6. They forsake the ordinances which favour that way, Heb. x. 25. and despise the danger; for, looking for indignation, they trample that blood still, Heb. x. 27. 29. (2.) The party acteth *freely*. It is not from unadvisedness, nor from force or constraint, but an acting of free choice; nothing doth force the Pharisees to speak against and persecute Christ. They 'crucify to themselves,' they re-act the murder of their own free accord, and in their own bosom, none constraining them, Heb. vi. 6. They sin of free choice, or as the word may be rendered, spontaneously, Heb. x. 26. (3.) It is acted *wilfully*. They are so resolute, they will not be dissuaded by any offer, or the most precious means, as is clear in the foresaid scriptures. (4.) It is done *maliciously*, so as it proceeds not so much, if at all, from a temptation to pleasure, profit, or honour. It proceedeth not from fear, or force, or from any good end proposed;

poſed; but out of heart-malice againſt God and Chriſt, and the advancement of his glory and kingdom: ſo that it is of the very nature of Satan's ſin, who hath an irreconcileable hatred againſt God, and the remedy of ſin, becauſe his glory is thereby advanced. This is a ſpecial ingredient in this ſin. The Phariſees are found guilty of heart-malice againſt Chriſt, ſince they ſpake ſo againſt him, and not againſt their own children caſting out devils; and this is the force of Chriſt's argument; 'If I by Beelzebub caſt out devils, by 'whom do your children caſt them 'out?' Matth. xii. 27. They do their utmoſt to crucify Chriſt again, and to bring him to an open ſhame, Heb. vi. 6. They are adverſaries like the devil, Heb. x. 27. (5.) It is done *deſpitefully*. The malice muſt bewray itſelf. The Phariſees muſt proclaim that Chriſt hath correſpondence with devils, Matth. xii. 24. He muſt be put to an open ſhame, and crucified again, Heb. vi. 6. They muſt tread under foot that blood, and do deſpite to the Spirit, Heb. x. 29. So that the party had rather periſh a thouſand times, than be in Chriſt's debt for ſalvation.

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The *last* thing in the description, is, the ordinary attendant or consequence of this sin; it breedeth 'desperate and 'hopeless fear.' They fear him whom they hate, with a slavish hopeless fear, such as devils have, Heb. x. 27. 'A cer-'tain fearful looking for of judgment, 'and fiery indignation, which shall de-'vour the adversaries.' They know that God will put out his power against them; they tremble in the remembrance of it; and if they could be above him, and destroy him, they covet it; and since they cannot reach that, they hate with the utmost of heart-malice, and do persecute him, and all that is his, with despite.

As for the *third* thing proposed, *viz.* the conclusions to be drawn from what is said, whereby we will speak directly to the objection. (1.) As I hinted before, since the sin against the Holy Ghost is so remarkable, and may be well known where it is, none should charge themselves with it, unless they can prove and instruct the charge; for it is a great wrong done unto God, to labour to persuade my soul that he will never pardon me; it is the very way to make me desperate, and to lead me unto the unpardonable

unpardonable sin; therefore, unless thou can and dare say, that thou dost hate the way which God hath devised for saving of sinners, and dost resolve to oppose the thriving of his kingdom, both with thyself and others, out of malice and despite against God, thou oughtest not to suspect thyself guilty of this sin. (2.) Whatsoever thou hast done against God, if thou dost rue it, and wish it were undone, thou cannot be guilty of this sin; for in it, heart-malice and despite against God do still prevail. (3.) If thou art content to be his debtor for pardon, and would be infinitely obliged unto him for it, then thou cannot in that case be guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost; for, as we shewed before, they who are guilty of it, do so despite God, that they would not be his debtors for salvation. (4.) Whatsoever thou hast done, if thou hast a desire after Jesus Christ, and dost look with a sore heart after him, and cannot think of parting with his blessed company for ever, or, if thou must shed with him, yet dost wish well to him, and all his, thou needest not suspect thyself to be guilty of this unpardonable sin; for there can be no such hatred

of

of him in thy boſom, as is neceſſarily required to make up that ſin. (5.) If thou would be above the reach of that ſin, and ſecure againſt it for ever, then go work up thy heart to pleaſe ſalvation by Chriſt Jeſus, and to cloſe with God in him, acquieſcing in him as the ſufficient ranſom and reſt, as we have been preſſing before, and yield to him to be ſaved in his way. Do this in good earneſt, and thou ſhalt be for ever put out of the reach of that ugly thing, wherewith Satan doth affright ſo many poor ſeekers of God.

CHAP. VII.

Objections, taken from want of power to believe, and unfruitfulneſs, anſwered.

Object. ALTHOUGH I be not excluded from the benefit of the new covenant, yet it is not in my power to believe upon Chriſt; for faith is the gift of God, and above the ſtrength of fleſh and blood.

Anſw. It is true that ſaving faith, by which alone a man can heartily cloſe with God in Chriſt, is above our power, and is the gift of God, as we ſaid before in the premiſſes: yet remember,

(1.) The Lord hath left it as a duty upon all who hear this gospel, cordially by faith to close with his offer of salvation through Christ, as is clear in the scripture. And you must know, that although it be not in our power to perform that duty of ourselves; yet the Lord may justly condemn for not performing of it, and we are inexcusable; because at first he made man perfectly able to do whatsoever he should command. (2.) The Lord commanding this thing, which is above our power, willeth us to be sensible of our inability to do the thing, and would have us putting it on him to work it in us. He hath promised to give the new heart, and he hath not excluded any from the benefit of that promise. (3.) The Lord useth, by these commands and invitations, and mens meditation on the same, and their supplication about the thing, to convey power unto the soul to perform the duty.

Therefore, for answer to the objection, I do obtest thee in the Lord's name, to lay to heart these his commandments and promises, and meditate on them, and upon that blessed business of the new covenant, and pray unto

unto God, as you can, over them, 'for 'he will be inquired to do these things,' Ezek. xxxvi. 37. and lay thy cold heart to that device of God expressed in the scriptures, and unto Christ Jesus, who is given for a covenant to the people, and look to him for life and quickening. Go and essay to please that salvation in the way God doth offer it, and to close with, and rest on Christ for it, as if all were in thy power; yet looking to him for the thing, as knowing that it must come from him: and if thou do so, he who 'meets these who remember 'him in his ways,' Is. lxiv. 5. will not be wanting on his part; and thou shalt not have ground to say, that thou movedst towards the thing until thou could do no more for want of strength, and so left it at God's door. It shall not fail on his part, if thou have a mind for the business. Yea, I may say, if by all thou hast ever heard of that matter, thy heart loveth it, and desireth to be in hands with it, thou hast it already performed within thee; so that difficulty is past, before thou was aware of it.

Object. Many who have closed with Christ Jesus, as said is, are still complaining of their leanness and fruitless-

ness, which maketh my heart lay the less weight on that duty of believing.

Answ. If thou be convinced that it is a duty to believe on Christ, as said is, you may not shift it under any pretence. As for these complaints of some who have looked after him, not admitting every one to be judge of his own fruit, I say,

1. Many, by their jealousies of God's love, and by their misbelief, after they have so closed with God, do obstruct many precious communications, which otherwise would be let out to them, Matth. xiii. 58. 'And he did not many 'mighty works there, because of their 'unbelief.'

2. It cannot be that any whose heart is gone out after Christ, have found him a wilderness, Jer. ii. 31. Surely they find somewhat in their spirit swaying them towards God in these two great things, *viz.* How to be found in him in that day, Phil. iii. 8. 9. 'Yea doubtless, 'and I count all things but loss, for the 'excellency of the knowledge of Christ 'Jesus my Lord; for whom I have 'suffered the loss of all things, and 'do count them but dung that I may 'win Christ, and be found in him,

'not

'not having mine own righteousness, 'which is of the law, but that which 'is through the faith of Christ, the 'righteousness which is of God by 'faith;' and, how to be forthcoming to his praise in the land of the living, Psal. cxix. 17. 'Deal bountifully with 'thy servant, that I may live, and keep 'thy word.' Psal. lvi. 13. 'Wilt thou 'not deliver my feet from falling, that 'I may walk before God in the light 'of the living?' They find these two things aloft in the soul, and that is much. Moreover, they shall, after search, if they judge aright, find ever such an emptiness in the creatures, which abundance of the creature cannot fill up: all is vanity, only God can fill the empty room in their heart; and when he but breatheth a little, there is no room for additional comfort from creatures. This saith, that God hath captivated the man, and hath fixed that saving principle in the understanding and heart, 'Who is God but the 'Lord?' 'Worship him, all ye gods,' Psal. xcvii. 7. Yea, further, these whose heart hath closed with God in Christ, as said is, will not deny that there have been seasonable preventings

and quickenings now and then, when the soul was like to fail, Psal. xxi. 3. 'For thou preventest me with the blessings of thy goodness.' Psal xciv. 18. 19. 'When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.' Therefore let none say, that there is no fruit following; and let none shift their duty upon the unjust and groundless complaints of others.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Covenanting with God.

Object. ALTHOUGH I judge it my duty to close with God's device in the covenant, I am in the dark how to manage that duty; for sometimes God doth offer to be our God without any mention of Christ, and sometimes saith, that he will betrothe us unto him; and in other places of scripture, we are called to come to Christ, and he is the Bridegroom. Again, God sometimes speaketh of himself as a Father to men, sometimes as a Husband; Christ is sometimes called the Husband, and sometimes a Brother, which

which relations seem inconsistent, and do much put me in the dark how to apprehend God, when my heart would agree with him, and close with him.

Answ. It may be very well said, that men do come to God, or close with him, and yet they come to Christ, and close with him. They may be said to come under a marriage-relation unto God, and unto Christ also, who is Husband, Father, Brother, *&c.* to them; and there is no such mystery here as some do conceive.

For the better understanding of it, consider these few things. (1.) Although God made man perfect at the beginning, and put him in some capacity of transacting with him immediately, Eccl. vii. 29. 'God hath made man 'upright;' Gen. ii. 16. 17. 'And the 'Lord God created the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden thou mayst 'freely eat,' *&c.*: yet man, by his fall, did put himself at a perfect distance with God, and in an utter incapacity to bargain or deal any more with him immediately.

(2.) The Lord did, after Adam's fall, make manifest the new covenant, in which he did signify he was content to transact

transact with man again in and through a Mediator; and so did appoint men to come to him through Christ, Heb. vii. 25. 'He is able to save them to the ut-'termost, that come unto God by him,' and to look for acceptation only in him, Eph. i. 6. 'To the praise of the glory of 'his grace, wherein he hath made us ac-'cepted in the beloved,' ordaining men to hear Christ, he being the only party in whom God was well pleased, Matth. xvii. 5. 'This is my beloved Son, in 'whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.'

(3.) This matter is so clear, and supposed to be so notour in the scripture, and so manifest to all who are under the ordinances, that the Lord doth often speak of transacting with himself, not making mention of the Mediator, because it is supposed, that every one in the church knoweth that now there is no dealing with God, except by and through Christ Jesus the Mediator.

(4.) Consider that Christ Jesus, God-man, is not only a fit trysting-place for God and men to meet into, and a fit spokesman to treat between the parties now at variance, 2 Cor. v. 19. 'God was 'in Christ, reconciling the world to 'himself;' but we may say also, he is immediate

immediate Bridegroom; and ſo our cloſing or tranſacting with God may be juſtly called *the marriage of the King's Son*, and the elect may be called *the Lamb's wife;* Chriſt Jeſus being, as it were, the hand which God holdeth out unto men, and on which they lay hold when they deal with God. And ſo through and by Chriſt we cloſe with God, as our God, on whom our ſoul doth terminate laſtly and ultimately through Chriſt, 1 Pet. i. 21. 'Who by 'him do believe in God that raiſed him 'up from the dead, and gave him glory, 'that your faith and hope might be in 'God.'

(5.) Conſider that the divers relations mentioned in ſcripture, are ſet down, to ſignify the ſure and indiſſoluble union and communion between God and his people: whatſoever nearneſs is between head and members, root and branches, king and ſubjects, ſhepherd and flock, father and children, brother and brother, huſband and wife, *&c.* all is here: John xvii. 21. 22. 23. 26. 'And they all 'ſhall be one, as thou, Father, art in me, 'and I in thee; that they alſo may be 'one in us: that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me. And the

'glory

'glory which thou gaveſt me, I have 'given them: that they may be one, 'even as we are one. I in them, and 'thou in me, that they may be made 'perfect in one, and that the world 'may know that thou haſt ſent me, 'and haſt loved them, as thou haſt 'loved me. And I have declared unto 'them thy name, and will declare it: 'that the love wherewith thou haſt 'loved me, may be in them, and I in 'them.' So that whatſoever be ſpoken in ſcripture, people may be clear, that God calleth them to be reconciled unto him through Chriſt, and doth offer himſelf to be their God and Huſband in him alone: and men are to accept God to be their God in Chriſt, pleaſing that way of relief for poor man, and to give up themſelves unto God in Chriſt, in whom alone they can be accepted. And they who cloſe with Chriſt, they do cloſe with God in him, who is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf, 2 Cor. v. 19. John xiv. 8. 9. 10. 11. And we are not to dip further into the divers relations mentioned in ſcripture, between God, or Chriſt, and men, than as they may point out union and communion,

or nearneſs with God through Chriſt Jeſus, and our advantage thereby.

Theſe things being clear, we will not multiply words: But, ſince to believe on Chriſt is the great duty required of all that hear this goſpel, we obteſt every one, in the Lord's name, to whom the report of this ſhall come, that without delay they take to heart their loſt condition in themſelves, and that they lay to heart the relief which God hath provided by Jeſus Chriſt, whereof he hath made a free offer unto all who will be content of the ſame, and to be ſaved that way; and that they lay to heart, that there is no other way of eſcape from the wrath that is to come, becauſe of which men would be glad, at the laſt day, to run into a lake of melted lead, to be hid from the face of the Lamb, whom they do here deſpiſe: we ſay, we obteſt all, in the conſideration of theſe things, to work up their heart to this buſineſs, and to lay themſelves open for God, and to receive him through Chriſt, in the offers of the goſpel, acquieſcing in him, as the only deſirable and ſatisfying good, that ſo they may ſecure themſelves. Go ſpeedily and ſearch for his offers of peace and ſalvation in the

ſcripture,

scripture, and work up your heart and soul to close with them, and with Christ in them, and with God in Christ, and do it so, as you may have this to say, that you were serious, and in earnest, and cordial here, as ever you were in any thing, to your apprehension; and for ought you know, Christ is the choice of your heart, at least you neither know nor allow any thing to the contrary; whereupon your heart doth appeal unto God to search and try if there be ought amiss, to rectify it, and lead into the right way.

Now, this cleaving of the heart unto him, and casting itself upon him, to be saved in his way, is believing; which doth indeed secure a man from the wrath that is to come, because now he hath received Christ, and believeth on him, and so 'shall not enter into condemnation,' as saith the scripture.

Object. When I hear what it is to believe on Christ Jesus, I think sometimes I have faith; for I dare say, to my apprehension, I please the invention of saving sinners by Christ Jesus; my heart goeth out after him, and doth terminate upon him as a satisfying treasure; and I am glad to accept God to be my God

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in him. But I often do queſtion if ever I have done ſo; and ſo am, for the moſt part, kept heſitating and doubting if I do believe, or be ſavingly in covenant with God.

Anſw. It is ordinary for many whoſe hearts are gone out after Chriſt in the goſpel, and have received him, to bring the ſame in queſtion again: therefore I ſhall adviſe one thing as a notable help to fix the ſoul in the maintaining faith and an intereſt in God; and that is, that men not only cloſe heartily with God in Chriſt, as ſaid is, but alſo, that they "expreſsly, explicitly, by word of "mouth and vive voice, and formally "cloſe with Chriſt Jeſus, and accept "God's offer of ſalvation through him, "and ſo make a covenant with God." And this, by God's bleſſing, may contribute not a little for eſtabliſhing them anent their ſaving intereſt in God.

Before I ſpeak directly to this expreſs covenanting with God, I premiſe theſe few things. (1.) I do not here intend a covenanting with God, eſſentially differing from the covenant between God and the viſible church, as the Lord doth hold it out in his revealed will; neither do I intend a covenant, differing

essentially from the transacting of the heart with God in Christ formerly spoken unto: it is that same covenant; only it differeth by a singular circumstance, *viz.* the formal expression of the thing which the heart did before practise.

(2.) I grant this express covenanting and transacting with God, is not absolutely necessary for a man's salvation; for if any person close heartily and sincerely with God, offering himself in Christ in the gospel, his soul and state is thereby secured, according to the scripture, although he utter not words with his mouth: but this express verbal covenanting with God is very expedient for the better being of a man's state, and his more comfortable maintaining of an interest in Christ Jesus.

(3.) This express covenanting with God by word of mouth, is of no worth, without sincere heart-closing with God in Christ joined with it; for without that, it is but a profaning of the Lord's name, and a mocking of him to his face, so to draw near unto him with the lips, whilst the heart is far away from him.

(4.) I grant, both cordial and verbal transacting with God, will not make out

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a man's gracious estate unto him, so as to put and keep it above controversy, without the joint witness of the Spirit, by which we know what is freely given unto us of God; yet this explicit way of transacting with God, joined with that heart-closing with him in Christ, contributes much for clearing up unto a man, that there is a fixed bargain between God and him, and will do much to ward off him many groundless jealousies and objections of an unstable mind and heart, which useth affrontedly to deny this hour, what it did really act and perform the former hour. This explicit covenanting is as an instrument taken of what passed between God and the soul, and so hath its own advantage for strengthening of faith.

As for this express covenanting, we shall, I. Shew that it is a very warrantable practice. II. We shall shew shortly what is preparatorily required of those who do so transact with God. III. How men shall go about that duty. IV. What should follow thereupon.

I. As to the *first*, I say, it is a warrantable practice, and an incumbent duty, expressly and by word to covenant with God; which appeareth thus:

1. In many places of scripture, if we look to what they may bear, according to their scope, and the analogy of faith, God hath commanded it, and left it on people as a duty, Is. xliv. 5. 'One shall 'say, I am the Lord's.' Is. xlv. 24. 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I 'righteousness and strength. Jer. iii. 4. 'Wilt thou not from this time cry unto 'me, My father, thou art the guide of 'my youth?' Zech. xiii. 9. 'They shall 'say, The Lord is my God.' Hos. ii. 16. 'Thou shalt call me Ishi;' and in many places elsewhere. Now since God hath so clearly left it on men in the letter of the word, they may be persuaded, that it is a practice warranted and allowed by him, and well-pleasing unto him.

Arg. 2. It is the approven practice of the saints in scripture, thus expressly to covenant with God, and they have found much quiet in that duty afterwards. David did often expressly say unto God, that he was his God, his portion, and that himself was his servant. Thomas will put his interest out of question with it, John xx. 28. 'And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and 'my God.' Yea, I say, the saints are much quieted in remembrance of what hath

hath passed that way between God and them, Psal. lxxiii. 25. 'Whom have I in 'heaven but thee? and there is none up-'on earth that I desire besides thee.' Psal. cxlii. 5. 'I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, 'Thou art my refuge and my portion in 'the land of the living.' We find it often so in the book of the Canticles. Now shall the chief worthies of God be so much in a duty, breeding so much quiet and satisfaction to them in many cases, and shall we be under the New Testament, unto whom access is ministered abundantly, and who partake of the sap of the olive; shall we, I say, lie behind in this approven piece of homelines with God? Since we study to imitate that cloud of witnesses in other things, as faith, zeal, patience, *&c.* let us also imitate them in this.

Arg. 3. The thing about which we move here, is a matter of the greatest concernment in all the world: it is the life of our soul, Deut. xxxii. 47. Oh, shall men study to be express, explicit, plain, and peremptory in all their other great businesses, because they are such; and shall they not much more be peremptory and express in this, which doth most concern them? I wonder that many not

only do not speak it with their mouth, but that they do not swear and subscribe it with their hand, and do not every thing for securing of God to themselves in Christ, and themselves unto God, which the scripture doth warrant, Is. xliv. 5.

This also may have its own weight, as an argument to press this way of covenanting with God, that the business of an interest in Christ, and of real and honest transacting with him, is a thing which, in the experience of saints, is most frequently brought upon debate and in question; therefore men had need, all the ways they can, even by thought, word, and deed, to put it to a point.

This also may have place here for pressing this as a duty, that God is so formal, express, distinct, and legal, to say so, in all the business of man's salvation, *viz.* Christ must be a near Kinsman, to whom the right of redemption doth belong; he must be chosen, called, authorized, and sent; covenants formally drawn between the Father and him, the Father accepting payment and satisfaction, giving formal discharges, all done clearly and expressly. Shall the Lord be so express, plain, and peremptory in every

very part of the buſineſs, and ſhall our part of it reſt in a confuſed thought, and we be as dumb beaſts before him? If it were a marriage between man and wife, it would not be judged enough, although there were conſent in heart given by the woman, and known to the man, if ſhe did never expreſs ſo much by word, being in a capacity to do ſo. Now this covenant between God and man, is held out in ſcripture, as a marriage between man and wife, Hoſ. ii. 19. 20 2 Cor. xi. 2.; the whole Song of Solomon ſpeaketh it. The Lord uſeth ſimilitudes, to ſignify unto us what he intends; and ſurely this is a ſpecial requiſite in marriage, that the wife give an expreſs and explicit conſent unto the buſineſs: the man ſaith, So I take thee to be my lawful wife, and do oblige myſelf to be a dutiful huſband: the woman is obliged on the other part, to expreſs her conſent, and to ſay, Even ſo I take thee to be my lawful huſband, and do promiſe duty and ſubjection. It is ſo here, the Lord ſaith, 'I do betrothe thee 'unto me in faithfulneſs, and thou ſhalt 'call me Iſhi,' that is, my Huſband, Hoſ. ii. 16. 20. 'I will be for thee as a 'Head and Huſband, if thou wilt not

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'be for another,' Hos. iii. 3. The man ought to answer, and say, Amen, so be it, thou shalt be my God, my Head and Lord, and I shall and will be thine, and not for another, Cant. vi. 3. 'I am my 'beloved's, and my beloved is mine.' And so this making of the covenant with God, is called *a giving of the hand to him*, as the word is, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. which doth hint a very express, formal, explicit, and positive bargaining with God. So then, we conclude it to be an incumbent duty, and a very approven practice, necessary for the quieting of a man's mind, and his more comfortable being in covenant with God, and more fully answering God's condescendency and offer in that great and primary promise, 'I will be your God, and you 'shall be my people.'

Not only may and should people thus expressly close with God in Christ for fixing their heart; but they may, upon some occasions, renew this verbal transaction with God, especially when through temptations they are made to question if ever they have really and sincerely closed covenant with God. As they are then to put out new acts of faith,

faith, embracing Chriſt as the deſirable portion and treaſure, and alſo upon other occaſions; ſo it were expedient, eſpecially if there remain any doubt anent the thing, that by vive voice and expreſs word, they determine that controverſy, 'and ſay of the Lord, and to 'him, that he is their refuge and por-'tion,' Pſal. xci. 2. Pſal. cxlii. 5. We find the ſaints doing ſo, and we may imitate them. Eſpecially,

1. In the time of great backſliding, people were wont to renew the covenant with God, and we ſhould do ſo alſo; our heart ſhould go out after Chriſt in the promiſes of reconciliation with God, for he is our peace upon all occaſions, and our advocate, and we are bound to apprehend him ſo, when we tranſgreſs, 1 John ii. 1. 'If any man 'ſin, we have an advocate with the 'Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous,' and to expreſs ſo much by word, as the ſaints did in their formal renewing of the covenant.

2. When people are in hazard, and difficulties are preſent or foreſeen, then it were good that they ſhould ſend out their heart after him, and expreſs their adhering unto him, for ſecuring their

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own heart. We find Joshua doing so, when he was to settle in the land of Canaan, in the midst of snares, Josh. xxiv.; so David doth in his straits, Psal. lvii. 1. 'In the shadow of thy wings 'will I make my refuge, until these ca-'lamities be overpast.'

3. When men apprehend God to be at a distance from them, and their soul to be under withering and decay, then it is safest heartily to close with Christ, and embrace him by faith for the securing of the soul; and it were good to put it out of question, by the expression of the thing. This is the ready way to draw sap from Christ the root, for recovering of the soul, and for establishing the heart before him. The spouse in the Song of Solomon doth so, thus asserting her interest in him, when in such a condition, professing and avowing him to be her beloved, Cant. v.

4. At the celebration of the Lord's supper, men should thus cordially close with God in Christ, and speak and express so much; for, that is a feast of love; and then and there we come under a solemn profession of closing with God

God in Chriſt perſonally and openly, and do receive the ſeal of it: it is therefore beſeeming, at that time, to bring up both heart and tongue to ſecond and anſwer our profeſſion, apprehending God to be our God, and reſigning over ourſelves to be his, and at his diſpoſing.

We ſhall not confine the Lord's people to times and ſeaſons of this duty, the Lord may bind it upon them at his pleaſure; only there is hazard, that by too frequent expreſs covenanting with God, men turn too formal in it; therefore, it is not ſo fit that people ſhould ordinarily at full length renew that explicit tranſaction with God, but rather to declare unto God, that they adhere unto the covenant made with him, and that they do maintain and will never revoke nor recal the ſame; and withal, they may hint the ſum of it, in laying claim unto God in Chriſt, as their own God: and this they may do often, even in all their addreſſes to God. And probably this is the thing deſigned by the ſaints in their ſo ordinary practice in ſcripture, whilſt they aſſert their intereſt in God, as their God and portion; and it is fit, that men, in all their walk, hold

hold their heart at the business, by heart-cleaving to God in Christ. 'The 'life we live in the flesh, should be by 'faith in the Son of God,' Gal. ii. 20.

II. As to the *second* thing, *viz.* What is preparatorily required of him who is expressly to transact with God here: beside what we spake before, as previous to a man's closing with Christ Jesus, we only add, (1.) That he who would explicitly bargain with God, must know, that to do so, is warranted and allowed by God, as we shewed before: if this be wanting, a man cannot do it in faith, and so it will be sin unto him, Rom. xiv. 23. 'Whatsoever is not of 'faith, is sin.' (2.) The man must labour to bring up his heart to the thing, that it do not belie the tongue; it will be a great mocking of God, so to 'draw near him with the lips, whilst 'the heart is far off from him,' Is. xxix. 13.

III. The *third* thing to be considered in this express verbal covenanting with God, is the way how it is to be performed and managed: and beside what was said before in heart-closing with Christ, I add here,

1. The man should do it *confidently*, not

not only believing that he is about his duty when he doth it, but alſo, that God in Chriſt Jeſus will accept his poor imperfect way of doing this duty: he doth 'accept a man according to what 'he hath, if there be a willing mind,' 2 Cor. viii. 12. A mite is accepted, ſince it is all the poor woman's ſubſtance, Mark xii. 44. Yea, if it can be attained, the man ſhould believe that the iſſue and conſequence of this tranſacting ſhall prove comfortable, and all ſhall be well; and that God who engageth for all in the covenant, (ſince he hath determined the man to this happy choice), will in ſome meaſure make him forthcoming, and will perfect what concerns him: 'Faithful is he that calleth 'you, who alſo will do it,' 1 Theſſ. v. 24. If this confidence be wanting, the matter will be done with much fear and jealouſy, if not worſe; and will ſtill prove a diſquieting buſineſs to the man.

2. It ſhould be done *holily*. It is called *the holy covenant*, Luke i. 72. *the holy things of David*, Acts xiii. 34. Here it were fitting, that what is done in this expreſs tranſacting with God, ſhould not be done paſſingly, and on

the by, but in some special address unto God; the thing should be spoken unto the Lord, Psal. cxlii. 5. 'I cried unto 'thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my 'refuge, and my portion.' It is beseeming in so great a business, that a piece of time were set apart for confession and supplication before God; yea, also the person so transacting with God, should labour to have high apprehensions of God's greatness and sovereignty, 2 Sam. vii. 22. 'Thou art 'great, O Lord God; for there is none 'like thee, neither is there any God 'beside thee,' although he thus humble himself to behold things in heaven and earth: and these high and holy thoughts of him, will and should be attended with debasing and humbling thoughts of self, although admitted to this high dignity, 2 Sam. vii. 18. 'Then went 'King David in, and sat before the 'Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord 'God? and what is my house, that 'thou hast brought me hitherto?' It is no small thing to be allied unto, and with the great God of heaven, and his Son Christ; as David speaketh when King Saul did offer his daughter unto him, 1 Sam. xviii. 22. Yea, further, there

there should be special guarding and watching, that the heart keep spiritual in transacting with God. There is great reason for this holy way of performing the duty; for men are ready to misken themselves, and to shape the Lord according to their own fancy, and to turn carnal in the business, since it is a marriage-transaction held out in all the ordinary expressions of love, as in the Song of Solomon, Is. lxii. 5. Zeph. iii. 17.

IV. The *fourth* thing we shall speak a word unto, is, What should follow upon this express verbal covenanting with God. I say, beside that union and communion with God in Christ, following upon believing, if a man explicitly by word transact with God,

1. He should thenceforth be singularly careful to abide close by God in all manner of conversation; for if a man thenceforth do any thing unsuitable, he doth falsify his word before God, which will stick much in his conscience, and prove a snare. If a man henceforth misken God, and take on him to dispose of himself, since he is not his own, and hath opened his mouth unto the Lord, 'he makes inquiry after vows, and de-

'voureth that which is holy,' Prov. xx. 25.

2. He who so transacteth with God, should hold stedfast that determination and conclusion. It is a shame for a man, whose heart hath closed with God, and whose mouth hath ratified and confirmed it solemnly before him, to contradict himself again, and to admit any thing to the contrary; he ought boldly to maintain the thing against all deadly.

Then let me obtest you who desire to be established in the matter of your interest in God, that with all conveniency you set apart a piece of time for prayer before God, and labouring to work up your heart to seriousness, affection, and the faith of the duty, to make a covenant, and to transact with God by express words after this manner.

'O Lord, I am a lost and broken 'creature by nature, and by innume-'rable actual transgressions, which I do 'confess particularly before thee this 'day: and although, being born with-'in the visible church, I was from the 'womb in covenant with thee, and had 'the same sealed unto me in baptism; yet, 'for a long time, I have lived without 'God in the world, senseless and igno-'rant

'rant of my obligation, by virtue of that
'covenant. Thou hast at length disco-
'vered unto me, and bound upon my
'heart, my miserable state in myself,
'and hast made manifest unto my heart
'the satisfying relief thou hast provided
'by Christ Jesus, offering the same free-
'ly unto me, upon condition that I
'would accept of the same, and would
'close with thee as my God in Christ,
'warranting and commanding me, up-
'on my utmost peril, to accept of this of-
'fer, and to flee unto Christ Jesus: yea,
'to my apprehension, now thou hast so-
'vereignly determined my heart, and
'shaped it for Christ Jesus, leading it
'out after him in the offers of the go-
'spel, causing me to approach unto the
'living God, to close so with him, and
'to acquiesce in his offer, without any
'known guile. And that I may come
'up to that establishment of spirit in
'this matter, which should be to my
'comfort, and the praise of thy glorious
'grace, therefore I am here this day to
'put that matter out of question, by ex-
'press words before thee, according to
'thy will. And now I, unworthy as I
'am, do declare, that I believe that
'Christ Jesus, who was slain at Jerusa-

'lem, was the Son of God, and the Sa-
'viour of the world; I do believe that
'record, that there is life eternal for
'men in him, and in him only; I do this
'day in my heart pleaſe and acquieſce
'in that device of ſaving ſinners by him,
'and do intruſt my ſoul unto him; I
'do accept of reconciliation with God
'through him, and do cloſe with thee
'as my God in him; I chooſe him in all
'that he is, and all that may follow
'him, and do reſign up myſelf, and
'what I am, or have, unto thee; deſi-
'ring to be divorced from every thing
'hateful unto thee, and that without
'exception, or reſervation of any thing
'conſiſtent within my knowledge, or
'intended reverſion. Here I give the
'hand to thee, and do take all things
'about me witneſſes, that I, whatever I
'be, or have hitherto been, do accept
'of God's offer of peace through Chriſt;
'and do make a ſure covenant with thee
'this day, never to be ranverſed, ho-
'ping that thou wilt make all things
'forthcoming, both on thy part and
'mine, ſeriouſly begging, as I deſire to
'be ſaved, that my corruptions may be
'ſubdued, and my neck brought under
'thy ſweet yoke in all things, and my

'heart

'heart made cheerfully to acquieſce in
'whatſoever thou doſt unto me, or with
'me, in order to theſe ends. Now,
'glory be unto thee, O Father, who de-
'viſed ſuch a ſalvation, and gave the
'Son to accompliſh it: glory be to Chriſt
'Jeſus, who, at ſo dear a rate, did pur-
'chaſe the outletting of that love from
'the Father's boſom, and through whom
'alone this acceſs is granted, and in
'whom I am reconciled unto God, and
'honourably united unto him, and am
'no more an enemy or ſtranger: glory
'to the Holy Ghoſt, who did alarm me
'when I was deſtroying myſelf, and
'who did not only convince me of my
'hazard, but did alſo open my eyes to
'behold the relief provided in Chriſt;
'yea, and did perſuade and determine
'my wild heart to fall in love with
'Chriſt, as the enriching treaſure, and
'this day doth teach me how to cove-
'nant with God, and how to impro-
'priate to myſelf all the ſure mercies of
'David, and bleſſing of Abraham, and
'to ſecure to myſelf the favour and
'friendſhip of God for ever. Now, with
'my ſoul, heart, head, and whole man, as
'I can, I do acquieſce in my choice this
'day, henceforth reſolving not to be my

'own,

'own, but thine; and that the care of 'whatsoever concerns me, shall be on 'thee as my Head and Lord: protesting 'humbly, that failings on my part (a-'gainst which I resolve, thou knowest) 'shall not make void this covenant, for 'so hast thou said, which I intend not 'to abuse, but so much the more to 'cleave close unto thee; and I must 'have liberty to renew, ratify, and draw 'extracts of this transaction, as often 'as shall be found needful. Now I 'know thy consent to this bargain 'stands recorded in scripture, so as I 'need no new signification of it; and 'I having accepted of thy offer upon 'thy own terms, will henceforth wait 'for what is good, and for thy salva-'tion in end. As thou art faithful, 'pardon what is amiss in my way of 'doing the thing, and accept me in my 'sweet Lord Jesus, in whom I only de-'sire pardon. And in testimony here-'of, I set to my seal that God is true, 'in declaring him a competent Sa-'viour.'

Let people covenant with God in fewer or more words, as the Lord shall dispose them; for we intend no platform of words for any person: only it were fitting

fitting that men ſhould, before the Lord, acknowledge their loſt ſtate in themſelves, and the relief that is by Chriſt; and that they do declare that they accept of the ſame as it is offered in the goſpel, and do thankfully reſt ſatisfied with it, intruſting themſelves henceforth wholly unto God, to be ſaved in his way, for which they wait according to his faithfulneſs.

If men would heartily and ſincerely do this, it might, through the Lord's bleſſing, help to eſtabliſh them againſt many fears and jealouſies; and they might date ſome good thing from this day and hour, which might prove comfortable unto them when they fall in the dark afterwards, and even when many failings do ſtare them in the face, perhaps at the hour of death: 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 'Theſe be the laſt words of David----- 'Although my houſe be not ſo with 'God; yet he hath made with me an 'everlaſting covenant, ordered in all 'things and ſure: for this is all my 'ſalvation, and all my deſire.' It is much if a man can appeal unto God, and ſay, Thou knoweſt there was a day and an hour, when in ſuch a place I did accept of peace through Chriſt, and did

deliver

deliver up my heart to thee, to write on it thy whole law without exception; heaven and earth are witnesses of it: 'Remember the word unto thy servant, 'upon which thou hast caused me to 'hope,' Psal. cxix. 49.

Object. I dare not adventure to speak such words unto God, because I find not my heart coming up full length in affection and seriousness: so I should but lie unto God, in transacting so with him.

Answ. It is to be regretted that mens heart doth not, with much benfail of desire and affection, embrace and welcome that blessed offer and portion: yet for answer to the objection, remember, 1. That in those to whom the Lord giveth the new heart, forming Christ in them, the whole heart is not renewed; there is flesh and spirit lusting against other, the one contrary unto the other, so as a man can neither do the good or evil he would do, with full benfail, Gal. v. 17. It is well if there be a good part of the heart going out after Christ, desiring to close with him on his own terms.

2. That there is often a rational love in the heart unto Christ Jesus, expressing itself

itſelf by a reſpect to his commandments, 1 John v. 3. 'This is the love of God, 'that we keep his commandments; and 'his commandments are not grievous.' When there is not a ſenſible prevailing love which maketh the ſoul ſick, Cant. ii. 5. 'I am ſick of love,' men muſt not always expect to find this. I ſay then, although ſomewhat in your heart draw back: yet if you can ſay that you are convinced of your broken ſtate without him, that you want a righteouſneſs to cover your guilt, and that you want ſtrength to ſtand out againſt ſin, or to do what is pleaſing before God, and that you alſo ſee fulneſs in him; in both theſe reſpects, if you dare ſay, that ſomewhat within your heart would be fain at him upon his own terms, and would have both righteouſneſs for juſtification, and ſtrength in order to ſanctification; and that what is within you contradicting this, is your burden, in ſome meaſure, and your bondage: if it be ſo, your heart is brought up a tolerable length; go on to the buſineſs. and determine the matter by covenanting with God, and ſay with your mouth, 'That you have both righteouſneſs and 'ſtrength in the Lord,' as he hath

ſworn

sworn you shall do, Is. xlv. 23. 24. It is approven divinity to say unto God, I believe, when much misbelief is in me, and the heart divided in the case, Mark ix. 24. 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine 'unbelief. Withal, shew unto God how matters are in your heart, that so you may be without guile before him, concealing nothing from him; and put your heart, as it is, in his hand, to write his law on it, according to the covenant; for that is the thing he seeks of men, that they deliver up their heart to him, that he may stamp it with his whole will, without exception: and if you can heartily consent unto that, judging Christ's blood a sufficient ransom and satisfaction for man's transgression, you may go and expressly strike covenant with God, for your heart and affection is already engaged.

Object. I dare not so covenant with God, lest I break to him; yea, I persuade myself, that if such a temptation did offer, so and so circumstantiated, I would fall before it, and succumb: therefore to transact so with God, whilst I foresee such a thing, were but to aggrege my condemnation.

Answ. 1. You have already entered covenant

covenant with God, as you are a member of his viſible church; and what is now preſſed upon you, is, but that you more heartily, ſincerely, particularly, and more expreſsly covenant and tranſact with him: you are already obliged heartily to cloſe with God in Chriſt, and if you do it in heart, I hope the hazard is no greater by ſaying that you do ſo, or have done ſo.

2. What will you do if you ſhift hearty tranſacting with God in Chriſt, and do not accept his peace as it is offered? You have not a ſecond of it in the world; either you muſt do this, or periſh for ever: and if you do it with your heart, you may alſo ſay it with your tongue.

3. If people may ſcare at covenanting with God, becauſe they will afterwards tranſgreſs, then not one man ſhould covenant with God; for ſurely every one will tranſgreſs afterwards, if they live any length of time after the tranſaction: and we know no way like this to ſecure men from falling; for if you covenant honeſtly with him, he engageth, beſide the new heart, to put his fear and law therein, to give his Spirit to cauſe you walk in his way.

And when you covenant with God, you deliver up yourself unto him to be sanctified and made conform to his will. It is rather a giving up of yourself to be led in his way in all things, and kept from every evil way, than any formal engagement on your part, to keep his way, and to hold off from evil: so that you need not scare at the covenant, the language whereof is, 'Wilt thou not be made clean?' Jer. xiii. 27. And all that shun to strike covenant with God, do thereby declare, that they desire not to be made clean.

4. As it is hard for any to say confidently, they will transgress, if such a temptation did offer, so and so circumstantiated, because men may think that either God will keep a temptation out of their way, or not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear, or give to them a way of escape, Psal. xlvi. 1. 'God is our refuge and 'strength, a very present help in trouble.' 1 Cor x. 13. 'There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, 'who will not suffer you to be tempted 'above that ye are able; but will with 'the temptation also make a way to 'escape,

escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' So the question is not, what I may do afterwards; but, what I now resolve to do. If my heart charge me presently with any deceit or resolution to transgress, I must lay aside that deceit before I transact with God: but if my heart charge me with no such purpose, yea, I dare say, I resolve against every transgression; and although I think I will fall before such and such a temptation, yet that thought floweth not from any allowed and approven resolution to do so, but from knowledge of my own corruption, and of what I have done to provoke God to desert me: but the Lord knows I resolve not to transgress, nor do I approve any secret inclination of my heart to such a sin, but would reckon it my singular mercy to be kept from sin in such a case; and I judge myself a wretched man, because of such a body of death within me, which doth threaten to make me transgress. In that case, I say, my heart doth not condemn me, therefore I may and ought to have confidence before God, 1 John iii. 21. If this then be the case, I say to thee, although thou should afterwards fail many ways,

and so perhaps draw upon thyself sad temporal strokes thereby. and lose for a season many expressions of his love; yet there is an Advocate with the Father to plead thy pardon, 1 John ii. 1. who hath satisfied for our breaches, Is. liii. 5. 6. 'He was wounded for our 'transgressions, he was bruised for our 'iniquities: the chastisement of our 'peace was upon him, and with his 'stripes we are healed. All we like 'sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the 'Lord hath laid on him the iniquity 'of us all.' And for his sake, God resolveth to hold fast the covenant with men after their transgression, Psal. lxxxix. 30.---37. 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my 'judgments; if they break my statutes, 'and keep not my commandments: 'nevertheless, my loving kindness will 'I not utterly take from him, nor suffer 'my faithfulness to fail: my covenant 'will I not break, nor alter the thing 'that is gone out of my lips. Once 'have I sworn by my holiness'---Else how could he be said to 'betrothe us 'unto himself for ever?' Hos. ii. 19. 20. and how could the covenant be called

called 'everlaſting, ordered in all things 'and ſure,' if there were not ground of comfort in it, even when our houſe is not ſo and ſo with God? 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Yea, it were no better than the covenant of works, if theſe who enter it with God, could ſo depart from him again, as to make it void unto themſelves, and to put themſelves into a worſe condition than they were in before they made it. Jer. xxxii. 40. 'And I will make an e-'verlaſting covenant with them, that I 'will not turn away from them to do 'them good'---compared with Heb. viii. 6. 'But now hath he obtained a more 'excellent miniſtry, by how much more 'alſo he is the Mediator of a better co-'venant, which was eſtabliſhed upon 'better promiſes.' Mal. ii. 16. 'The 'Lord hateth putting away.' No honeſt heart will ſtumble on this, but will rather be ſtrengthened thereby in duty: Hoſ. xiv. 4. to the end, 'I will 'heal their backſliding, I will love them 'freely: for mine anger is turned away 'from him.---Who is wiſe, and he ſhall 'underſtand theſe things? prudent, and 'he ſhall know them? for the ways of 'the Lord are right, and the juſt ſhall

'walk in them.' For other ties and bonds, beside the fear of divorce, and punishment by death, do oblige the ingenuous wife unto duty; so here men will 'fear the Lord and his goodness,' Hos. iii. 5.

Object. I have at the celebration of the Lord's supper, and at some other occasions, covenanted expressly and verbally with God; but my fruitlessness in his ways, and the renewed jealousies of my gracious state, maketh me question if ever I transacted with God in sincerity, and I think I can do it no otherwise than I have done it.

Answ. 1. Men are not to expect fruitfulness according to their desire, nor full assurance of God's favour immediately after they have fled unto Christ, and expressly transacted with God in him: these things will keep a man on work all his days. The saints had their failings and short-comings, yea, and backslidings, with many fits of dangerous misbelief, after they had very seriously, and sincerely, and expressly closed with God as their God in Christ.

2. Many do look for fruitfulness in their walk, and establishment of faith, from their own sincerity in transacting with God,

God, rather than from the Spirit of the Lord Jeſus. They heft their heart in their own honeſty and reſolutions, and not in the bleſſed root Chriſt Jeſus, without whom we can do nothing, and are vanity altogether in our beſt eſtate. Men ſhould remember, that one piece of grace cannot produce any degree of grace; further, nothing can work grace but the arm of JEHOVAH: and if men would lean unto Chriſt, and covenant with him as their duty abſolutely, whatſoever may be the conſequence, at leaſt, looking only to him for the ſuitable fruit, it ſhould fare better with them. God pleaſeth not that men ſhould betake themſelves unto Chriſt, and covenant with him for a ſeaſon, until they ſee if ſuch fruit and eſtabliſhment ſhall follow, purpoſing to diſclaim their intereſt in him and the covenant, if ſuch and ſuch fruit doth not appear within ſuch a length of time. This is to put the ways of God to trial, and is very diſpleaſing unto him. Men muſt abſolutely cloſe with Chriſt, and covenant with him, reſolving to maintain theſe things as their duty, and a ready way to reach fruit, whatſoever ſhall follow thereupon; they having a teſtimony within them, that they

they seriously design conformity to his revealed will in all things; and that they have closed covenant with him for the same end, as well as to be saved thereby.

3. Men should be sparing to bring in question their sincerity in transacting with God, unless they can instruct the same, or have great presumptions for it. If you can instruct any deceit or guile in your transacting with him, you are obliged to disclaim and rectify it; and to transact with God honestly, and without guile: but if you know nothing of your deceit or guile, in the day you did transact with him; yea, if you can say, that you did appeal unto God in that day, that you dealt honestly with him, and intended not to deceive; and did obtest him according to his faithfulness, to search and try if there was any crookedness in your way, and to discover it unto you, and heal it, 'Search me, O 'God, and know my heart; try me, 'and know my thoughts: and see if 'there be any wicked way in me, and 'lead me in the way everlasting, Psal. cxxxix. 23. 24. and that afterwards you came to the light, that your deeds might be manifest, John iii. 20. 21.; and

and if you can say, that God's answers from his word to you, in so far as you could understand, were answers of peace, and confirmations of your sincerity; yea further, if you dare say, that if upon life and death, you were again to transact with him, you can do it no other way, nor intend more sincerity and seriousness than before: then I dare say unto thee, in the Lord's name, thou ought not to question thy sincerity in transacting with God, but to have confidence before God, since thy heart doth not condemn thee, 1 John iii. 21. and thou art bound to believe, that 'God dealeth uprightly with the upright 'man, and with the pure doth shew 'himself pure,' Psal. xviii. 25. 26. If a man intend honesty, God will not suffer him to beguile himself; yea, the Lord suffereth no man to deceive himself, unless the man intend to deceive both God and men.

4. Therefore impute your unfruitfulness to your unwatchfulness and your misbelief, and impute your want of full assurance unto an evil heart of unbelief, helped by Satan to act against the glorious free grace of God; and charge not these things upon want of sincerity in your

your closing with Christ. And resolve henceforth to abide close by the root, and you shall bring forth more fruit; and by much fruit you lay yourself open to the witness of God's Spirit, which will testify with your spirit, that you have sincerely and honestly closed with God, and that the rest of your works are wrought in God, and approven of him; and so the witness of the Spirit and the water, joining with the blood, whereupon you are to lay the weight of your soul and conscience, and where alone you are to sink the curses of the law due unto you for all your sins, and failings in your best things; these three do agree in one, *viz.* that this is the way of life and peace, and that you have interest therein, and so you come to quietness and full assurance: John xv. 4. 5. 'Abide in me, and I in you. As the 'branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can 'ye, except ye abide in me. I am the 'vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same 'bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.' John xiv. 21. 23. 'He that hath my command-

'ments,

'ments, and keepeth them, he it is that 'loveth me: and he that loveth me, 'ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will 'love him, and will manifeſt myſelf to 'him. If a man love me, he will keep 'my words: and my Father will love 'him, and we will come unto him, and 'make our abode with him.' Rom. viii. 16. 'The Spirit itſelf beareth wit-'neſs with our ſpirit, that we are the 'children of God.' 1 John v. 8. 'There 'are three that bear witneſs in earth, 'the Spirit, and the water, and the 'blood: and theſe three agree in one.'

O bleſſed bargain of the new covenant, and thrice bleſſed Mediator of the ſame! Let him ride proſperouſly, and ſubdue nations and languages, and gather in all his jewels, that honourable company of the firſt-born, that ſtately troop of kings and prieſts, whoſe glory it ſhall be to have waſhed their garments in the blood of that ſpotleſs Lamb, and whoſe happineſs ſhall continually flouriſh in following him whitherſoever he goeth, and in being in the immediate company of the Ancient of days, one ſight of whoſe face ſhall make them in a manner forget that ever they were in the earth. Oh if I could perſuade men

to

to believe that these things are not *yea* and *nay*, and to make haste towards him, who hasteth to judge the world, and to call men to an account, especially anent their improvement of this gospel. 'Even so, come Lord Jesus.'

FINIS.

The whole treatise resumed in a few QUESTIONS and ANSWERS.

Quest. 1. WHAT is the great business a man hath to do in the world?

Answ. To make sure a saving interest in Christ Jesus, and to walk suitably thereunto.

Q. 2. Have not all the members of the visible church a saving interest in Christ?

A. No verily; yea, but a very few of them have it.

Q. 3. How shall I know if I have a saying interest in him?

A. Ordinarily the Lord prepareth his own way in the soul, by a work of humiliation, and discovereth a man's sin and misery to him, and exerciseth him so therewith, that he longs for the Physician Christ Jesus.

Q. 4. How shall I know if I have got a competent discovery of my sin and misery?

A. A competent sight of it makes a man take salvation to heart above any thing in this world: it maketh him disclaim all relief in himself, even in his best things: it maketh Christ, who is the Redeemer, very precious to the soul: it makes a man stand in awe to sin afterwards, and makes him content to be saved upon any terms God pleaseth.

Q. 5. What other way may I discern a saving interest in him?

A. By the going out of my heart seriously and affectionately towards him, as he is held out in the gospel; and this is faith or believing.

Q. 6. How shall I know if my heart goeth out after him aright, and that my faith is true saving faith?

A. Where the heart goeth out aright after him, in true and saving faith, the soul pleaseth Christ alone above all things, and pleaseth him in all his three offices, to rule and instruct, as well as to save; and is content to cleave unto him, whatsoever inconveniencies may follow.

Q. 7. What other mark of a saving interest in Christ can you give to me?

A. He that is in Christ savingly is a new creature, he is graciously changed and renewed in some measure, in the whole man, and in all his ways, pointing towards all the known commands of God.

Q. 8. What if I find sin now and then prevailing over me?

A. Although every sin deserveth everlasting vengeance, yet if you be afflicted for your failing, confess them with shame of face unto God, resolving to strive against them honestly henceforth, and flee unto Christ for pardon, you shall obtain mercy, and your interest stands sure.

Q. 9. What shall the man do who cannot lay claim to Christ Jesus, nor any of those marks spoken of?

A. Let him not take rest until he make sure unto himself a saving interest in Christ.

Q. 10. What way can a man make sure an interest in Christ, who never had a saving interest in him hitherto?

A. He must take his sins to heart, and his great hazard thereby, and he must take to heart God's offer of pardon and peace through Christ Jesus, and heartily close with God's offer, by betaking himself unto Christ the blessed refuge.

Q. 11. What if my sins be singularly heinous, and great beyond ordinary?

A. Whatsoever thy sins be, if thou wilt close with Christ Jesus by faith, thou shalt never enter into condemnation.

Q. 12. Is faith in Christ only required of men?

A. Faith is the only condition upon which God doth offer peace and pardon unto men. But be assured, faith, if it be true and saving, will not be alone in the soul, but will be attended with true repentance, and a thankful study of conformity to God's image.

Q. 13. How shall I be sure that my heart doth accept of God's offer, and doth close with Christ Jesus?

A. Go make a covenant expressly, and by word speak the thing unto God.

Q. 14. What way shall I do that?

A. Set apart some bit of time, and having considered your own lost estate, and the relief offered by Christ Jesus, work up your heart to please and close with that offer, and say unto God expressly, That you do accept of that offer, and of him to be your God in Christ; and do give up yourself to him to be saved in his way, without reservation or exception in any case; and that you henceforth will wait for salvation in the way he hath appointed.

Q. 15. What if I break unto God afterwards?

A. You must resolve on his strength not to break, and watch over your own way, and put your heart in his hand to keep it: and if you break, you must confess it unto God, and judge yourself for it, and flee to the Advocate for pardon, and resolve to do no more so: and this you must do as often as you fail.

Q. 16. How shall I come to full assurance of my interest in Christ, so as it may be above controversy?

A. Learn to lay your weight upon the blood of Christ, and study purity and holiness in all manner of conversation; and pray for the witness of God's Spirit, to join with the blood and the water: and his testimony added unto these will establish you in the faith of an interest in Christ.

Q. 17. What is the consequence of such closing with God in Christ by heart and mouth?

A. Union and communion with God, all good here, and his blessed fellowship in heaven for ever afterwards.

Q. 18. What if I slight all these things, and do not lay them to heart to put them in practice?

A. The Lord cometh with his angels in flaming fire, to render vengeance to them who obey not this gospel; and thy judgment shall be greater than the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah; and so much the greater that thou hast read this treatise, for it shall be a witness against thee in that day.

An

An explication of some SCOTS words that are used in this treatise.

TO *Aggrege*, to aggravate or heighten.
To *Airt*, to direct, from *airt*, a point in the heavens.
Anent, of, or concerning.—*Benfail*, to do a thing with a benfail, is to do it with force and vigour, as it were with a bent fail.
Cast, to cast out with one, is to fall out with him. To cast up a thing to a man, is to upbraid him with it. One is said to give another a cast of his hand, when he gives him a voluntary and effectual assistance.
A *Cautioner*, a surety.
To *compete* with one, is to become his rival.
To *condescend* upon, is to give a particular instance of.
Conform, conformable.
To *depone*, to depose, or swear to a thing as a witness.
A *dittay*, is either an accusation, or a sentence of condemnation.
Expede, expedited or dispatched.—An *extract*, an exemplification.
Faintet, maketh faint.—*Feckless*, weak, as it were *effectless*.
A *Glance*, a glimpse.
To *hast*, or *heft*, to fix, as a knife is fixed in its haft.
Hands, to be in hands with a thing, is to be in possession of it.
To *instruct* a thing, is to prove it clearly.
Law-biding, able to answer a charge, or accusation.
To *misken* a thing, is to let it alone, forbear it, or leave off meddling with it.—To *misken* a person, is not to own that you know him, to take no notice of him, or to neglect him.
Pass-gilt, current money.—To *please* a thing, is to be pleased with it.
To *put out*, to exert, or put forth.—A *reel*, a disorderly motion.
To *shed* with a person, is to part from him, or to leave him.
To be *sib*, or have a sibness to a man, is to be akin to him.
To *sit an offer*, is not to accept of it in time.
To *slait*, to abuse in the very worst manner.
To *sway*, or *sway* towards a thing, is to bend towards it.
To *take up a thing*, is to understand or apprehend it.
Thereaway, that way.
To *tryst*, or to *make a tryst*, is to appoint a meeting; in the country a tryst is a meeting to finish a bargain, or to compose a difference betwixt neighbours, and the trysting-place is the place of meeting.
To *win thither*, to get thither; *won at*, attained to.
Waff, here signifies a flash.

There are some expressions which are now become a little low that were not so when this book was written: there are likewise some phrases which are not English, but being expressed in English words, they will be easily understood by the English reader. Not one word in the edition published by the Author is changed in this, except that shewed is printed instead of shew, which was the old preterite tense, according to the custom of forming the preterite tense in *ew* of the verbs which end in *aw* or *ow*, as *draw*, *drew*, *grow*, *grew*. After the same manner the Scots verb *show* or *shaw* made in the preterite tense *shew*, which is still continued in some law forms.

The

The CONTENTS.

MEmoirs of the life and character of Mr William Guthrie the Author Page 3
Mr Traill's preface 42
The Author's preface 46
The Introduction 49

PART I. The trial of a saving interest in CHRIST.

Chap. I. A man's interest in Christ may be known: it is a matter of the highest importance, and is to be determined by scripture 51
Chap. II. Reasons why so few come to the clear knowledge of Christ 56
Chap. III. Some mistakes concerning an interest in Christ removed 69
Chap. IV. The ways by which the Lord draweth some to Christ without a sensible preparatory law-work 72
Chap. V. The work of the law by which the Lord prepares his way into mens souls; which is either more violent and sudden, or more calm and gradual 81
Chap. VI. The difference betwixt that preparatory law-work which hath a gracious issue, and the convictions of hypocrites 97
Chap. VII. Of faith 107
Chap. VIII. The difference betwixt the faith of hypocrites and true saving justifying faith 127
Chap. IX. Of the new creature 132
Chap. X. The difference betwixt a truly renewed man who is in Christ, and hypocrites 150
Chap. XI. Of the special communications of God, and the singular gracious operations of his Spirit 163

PART II. How to attain unto a saving interest in CHRIST 190

Chap. I. Some things premised for the information of those who are more ignorant 191
Chap. II. What it is to close with God's device of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, and that it is a necessary duty 197
Chap. III. What is previously required of those who would believe on Christ Jesus 205
Chap. IV. The properties and native consequences of true believing 216
Chap. V. Objections taken from a man's unworthiness, and the heinousness of his sin, answered 232
Chap. VI. Of the sin against the Holy Ghost 240
Chap. VII. Objections taken from the want of power to believe, and unfruitfulness, answered 253
Chap. VIII. Of covenanting with God 258
The whole treatise resumed in a few questions and answers 301